HOW SHE WON HIM

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HOW SHE WON HIM;

or

THE BRIDE OF CHARMING VALLEY

by

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HOW SHE WON HIM;

OR,

THE BRIDE OF CHARMING VALLEY.

CHAPTER I.

AFFECTION AND SELFISHNESS.

DOWN in the east of Pennsylvania, in a beautiful and romantic region known as Charming Valley, where the classic Susquehanna rolls, gentle and majestic, where dame Nature dresses in her richest and best attire, where the fathers and the children live in cheerfulness, in comfort and abundance, were the homes of Bertha Bower and of Leon Gaylord.

Graceful as the morning-glory, still sparkling with the dew-drops of the night, was little Bertha Bower, as she skipped through the lawn at play, or went lightly tripping to the district school. Her dress was as trim and tidy as the lilies of the meadow. Her features were as fresh and comely as the roses of the garden. Gentle and pleasant were her accents as the rippling of the brooklet.

Every morning, with her little basket, bounding along through the grove of pine trees, full as the day itself of sunshine and gladness, she turned her footsteps toward the shaded school-house, standing with all its kindly and all its tearful associations, at the elbow of the river.

Leon Gaylord could always be seen running before her; for the path was too strait and narrow for both, and then they could not well spare each other. Often would it happen with these children, at the noon-time recess, (but of course this was accidental,) they would find themselves, by chance, together.

They belonged to the same classes and studied the same books. Although Leon was a year or so her elder, Bertha would as often help him out of trouble as he her. And seldom if ever did the teacher have occasion to chide them with impropriety, or to stimulate them to increased effort. The teacher was often amused as well as gratified, to see them pursuing their studies together so earnestly; working out problems and assisting each other in arithmetic, grammar, geography and history. During the intermissions, they were just as devoted to each other, and were occupied just as assiduously and as innocently, studying each others' pleasure and comfort rather than their own.

Many were the fields, houses, cattle and sheep, belonging to Bertha's father. By everybody in the township, Rosco Bower was regarded as the ablest, the

wealthiest and the most thriving farmer in the broad and fertile Valley.

Leon Gaylord was fatherless. As to dollars, he was without any inheritance; yet he had an ample and far better fortune in his noble and gifted mother, whom he loved with all his heart. His ears were ever open to her instructions and precepts; ever ready and willing was he, with heart and hand, for her slightest wish and pleasure.

He had but few recollections with regard to his father. Horace Gaylord had died when his little boy was only two and a half years old. Leon barely recalled his form and face — his smiling, large, blue eyes, his affectionate kisses, and his gentle and plaintive voice. He also just remembered — and it was the last act of his father's life at home — how he had said one morning, while in the doorway, on the point of starting away, and while his mother stood by his side, smiling through her tears, "Kiss the dear little fellow for his papa, every morning and night, till I see him again." It seems he never returned. He died under a surgical operation. His health had been failing for some time, and his scanty means were nearly exhausted in his efforts to regain it.

Leaving money out of the question, there seemed nothing more proper and befitting than the loves of these two children. For years did their affections grow; and they were thinking of each other, morning,

noon and evening, with a roaming fancy, dreamy and childish.

Rosco Bower, the farmer, was very worldly minded. Early he saw these young affections sending forth their flexible, twining branches — throwing out their grasping, clinging tendrils; and he was filled with deep and painful emotions.

Nature had endowed Rosco Bower with no mean capacity. But he had cultivated himself in a narrow and mercenary line of policy. He had neglected his higher faculties until they were all checked and overgrown by the weeds of Selfishness. Unfortunately for him, he had been fortunate in about all his business operations. By this, like many other persons, he had come to regard money as "the chief end of man." He measured the souls of people by the extent of their possessions. He allowed that no ordinary man, possessed of all his natural faculties, could justify himself in being poor.

True, he had no personal objection to Leon, whatever; for well he knew the sterling virtues of the boy, and plainly saw his frank and manly bearing. But there was one charge standing against him — a charge which Leon had no power to answer. He was poor — poor, without romance, without guilt and without expectations. This, with Rosco, was the very crime of crimes. Never could he overcome it — never overcome this grave objection.

He felt that the boy was in his way, and hated

him in his heart — hated him for no other reason, but because of the growing affection between him and Bertha — or rather hated him on account of his poverty.

Never before had he broached his thoughts upon this subject to any one. He was not a talkative man. But one morning he broke out to Mrs. Bower, in the parlor, as if he could contain himself no longer, and his language was startling.

"Mrs. Bower, has it not occurred to you that these children are too much together? I have felt it to be the case for some time. Now I am determined to have a change. I can bear it no longer. It may be a difficult task to overcome their attachment, but then most certainly it must be done."

"If I could see any harm in their friendship," replied Mrs. Bower, after a little thought, "of course I should feel as you do, Rosco, but Leon is a noble fellow."

Rosco. Harm, dear wife? Why it is full of harm. He is a *poor* boy, and has no prospects whatever. That is harm enough. Think of our darling Bertha as the wife of a mere pauper! It is a thought which is not to be tolerated for a moment.

Mrs. B. Do you think nothing of character? Nothing of virtue, industry and ambition?

Rosco. I think of *money!* Without solid money, all these other matters are but stuff. I would have virtue and character of course. But money first. I

take the world as I find it. Money is the first consideration with the world; and so it must be with me. The world was made before I came into it. So I am not responsible for it, and I want no pauper in my family.

Mrs. B. Well, I shall not oppose your wishes. But beware of wounding the tender plant too deeply, lest you injure it beyond recovery.

Rosco. I am afraid, Mrs. Bower, that this has been neglected too long. It certainly must go no farther, at all events. That I am determined upon. Bertha is now coming in from the lawn. I have a plan in my mind that I wish to introduce to her.

As Bertha entered the parlor, she was singing like a bird. When she saw her father there, she stopped singing, and he commenced talking. Thus he addressed her:

"Well, Bertha, you seem as gay as a lark, this morning. May your life be always as happy as it is to-day."

Bertha. Every thing is so delightful this morning, papa. We have been walking a race — Leon and I. He has gone to his work now; and I must go down to the meadow and pick lilies for a bouquet. Mamma, can you spare me for a half an hour?

Mrs. B. Yes, Bertha, but don't forget the poor sick girl.

Bertha. No, mamma, it is for her that I want the lilies.

Rosco. Bertha, dear, please allow me a little talk before you go down to the meadow. I have been

thinking of something about you. What do you think it is? Well, I have been thinking that it is high time we were doing more for your education. Here you are at the age of sixteen, and have never yet been away to school. I wish to know whether you are satisfied with this state of things.

Bertha. No, papa, I am not.

Rosco. You have a very rich and a very kind-hearted uncle in Philadelphia—your mother's own brother. This you know very well. Now, how would it please you to spend the season there at school?

Bertha. Very much indeed, papa. Of course, I should miss my dear friends at home. But if you and mamma think best, I hope I shall have courage enough to carry out your wishes for my own good.

Rosco. I have just received a catalogue from a young ladies' institution in that city, which seems to be a good one, in which the summer term will commence in two weeks from to-day. Can you be in readiness by that time?

Bertha. Certainly. I think I ought to get ready in two weeks.

Rosco. Then I will write to your uncle Raphael to-day, and see if he can take you into his family. We shall be lonely at home, of course. But we must all be brave. You must fortify your heart against all childishness, of all kinds. Let nothing interfere with your studies. Have no correspondents but your father and mother.

Bertha. Can I write to no one else — not to Leon a few lines — just to let him know about the school?

Rosco. Bertha, it is out of the highest regard for your welfare, that I make this request. Your father knows best about such things. I say all childishness must now be put away. You are to think only of your studies. Nothing must be allowed to divide your thoughts — nothing to draw your mind away from your studies and books.

Bertha. Well, papa, you will allow me, now and then, to write to Leon's mother, and receive answers from *her?*

Rosco. I trust, my dear child, I only need to say that I fear this would be a violation of the very spirit of my request. My object is to give you an education, and I have the fullest confidence that my Bertha will not do any thing to hinder or embarrass me in my plan. I must tell you plainly, it will not do for you to correspond, either directly or indirectly, with Leon Gaylord. This whole question must be left for the consideration of maturer years. It will be settled in due time by circumstances. Let everything come in its proper order.

Bertha. (Sighing very sadly.) Well, papa, I promise to obey you faithfully. I will do my best to improve the opportunities which you so kindly provide me, and I will endeavor to be all ready by the day you have mentioned.

Rosco. Now, Bertha, you can go down to the meadow and pick flowers. (Kisses her.)

Mighty indeed was this child affection — this silent, gentle influence — this ardent passion. Stronger was it than the strength of money — or the strong man's power and will; excelling his maturest wisdom and sagest counsel; all his new contrivances baffling; in every fair and honest race successful; yet all innocent and self-unconscious.

Still, like the roots of oak or maple, growing deeper, sturdier and firmer, never resting but constantly growing, was the love of these children increasing. Ever unobserved was the progress — ever unperceived the process of its growth — till their souls were in full sympathy, till their hearts were pledged forever to each other.

Little thought the unsuspecting girl what deep loneliness and anguish were in store for her, when, with a light heart, she started away from home for her far-off destination.

How lovely was the morning! How delightful were the breezes! How sweet and blooming the country! How grand and resplendent the city!

With the growing brightness of each day, with the advancing footsteps of Spring, attended by Nature's children in teeming myriads, while clouds were dispersing and the heavens were growing brighter; while flowers were unfolding and birds were rejoicing, Bertha's heart was constantly growing darker. All the music and beauty, all the brightness and fragrance, only cast a shadow — a baleful shadow — in her pathway.

Mrs. Gaylord sat alone in her cottage, busy at her work and indulging in thought and meditation.

"So the dear girl has really gone to Philadelphia to school—probably for years. Well, I cannot find it in my heart to disapprove of it; though no other young person in the Valley would be missed as she will. Poor Leon! How he will bear it I cannot tell. But a first rate education is what Bertha ought to have, no doubt. If her own loving father and mother can bear the separation, other people certainly should not complain."

Here she was suddenly surprised by the phenomenon of Rosco Bower entering her humble cottage. He was apparently somewhat excited.

"Well, Mrs. Gaylord," said he, "we have lost Bertha, and our house is lonely enough."

"Not only *your* house, Mr. Bower, but the whole Valley seems lonely, since Bertha has left it."

"But we must look to the interest of our children, rather than our own gratification. I am determined to give Bertha a finished education, no matter if it takes five years. Then that noble boy of yours; such a bright and promising fellow. I wish to talk with you about *him*. I am sure it is no place for him here in Charming Valley. The *great West* is the proper field for him."

Mrs. G. Yes, Mr. Bower, I have had the same thought about Leon myself. If I only had the means

to take him West I certainly should not hesitate, for his sake, to do so.

Rosco. (Thoughtfully.) Leon is certainly a very promising young man. No doubt, if he were located West — at Cincinnati, for instance — he would develop into a prominent and wealthy citizen. I have noticed that he is very ingenious, as well as industrious. Such talents, I understand, are in great demand in that section. Well, Mrs. Gaylord, (rising,) if you think best, and shall decide to take your son out there, for the sake of giving him such an opportunity as he needs, you may count upon me as your friend; and I will provide you with all the money necessary to make the journey, and also to give you a comfortable start. Consider this proposition, if you please, in your own way. Certainly, I could have no possible interest in the matter, except for Leon's improvement and benefit; and I trust also for your own. For there seems to be but a slim chance here in Charming Valley, for poor people to make much headway. Think the matter over, and when you decide the question, just let me know. I shall be ready at any time to fulfil my promise. (Rosco starts for the door.)

The unsuspecting lady had listened with a swelling heart to Rosco's benevolent proposal. Without a suspicion of any selfish or sinister motive, feelingly and with a heart devoted to her son, thoughtless of herself, she thus replied to the scheming and deceitful man:

"Your munificence, sir, is most timely as it is also

most extraordinary. I accept it from your generous hand, with an overflowing heart. My thoughts with regard to my son, have been going in a similar way. Leon, of course, must be consulted in the matter, but I am confident that he, also, will esteem your generous proffer as a substantial benediction. And should he meet with success in life, no doubt he will return your money, with good interest." [Exit Rosco.]

Now Leon, though he had a brave and patient heart, for one so young and ardent, when the unexpected tidings of their proposed departure for the far West fell upon him with such crushing weight, though manful, brave and patient, Leon was shocked and strangely affected. For a time, his heart seemed suspended in its action. Life seemed to possess no more value for him. Every thing before him, just now so brilliant, so beautiful and so promising, tumbled into grisly chaos.

While Leon so fully confided in his mother's judgment and wisdom, he was sad at the thought of leaving his home — the only spot in the wide world with which he was much acquainted — so endeared to him by all the sweet memories of childhood, and above all, by the precious memories of Bertha Bower. While the big tears rolled from his eyes like rain from overcharged clouds, without a word of complaint or objection, believing his duty to his mother as well as his own true interest was involved, he bravely yielded to his fate, and gratefully consented to the proposition,

believing Mr. Bower to be a noble-hearted and generous friend.

After Mrs. Gaylord had repeated to him her conversation with Mr. Bower, and had expressed her own enthusiastic thoughts upon the grand possibilities for him, which it had opened to her mind — in eloquent words portraying the magnificence of the great western world — Leon thus replied to her:

"Dear mother, I am not loath to trust your judgment, or to accept your conclusions. My feelings, for the present, I cannot control. I feel the weight of a crushing blow upon my spirit. The very air seems thick and heavy. The summons to leave forever our dear home, with all its pleasant and sacred associations, seems to me almost like a message from the Court of Death."

Mrs. G. I suppose, Leon, that to the young, who are apt to think mostly of the present and little of the future, such feelings are natural. But I trust you will have the courage soon to overcome them. I expect they will be but temporary and will soon give way to joy and gladness, on account of the happy results of the change.

Leon. I intend, mother, that you shall not be disappointed in your expectations. May I tell you of a silly dream that I had last night? I know that dreams are nothing much. But this one was very different from all others, and had a peculiar impression about it. I thought I was down by the river side, standing upon

Profile rock — standing all alone, listening to the music of the waves. All at once I heard a noise behind me like the rushing wind. Looking round, I saw the loveliest sight that my eyes ever beheld. It was a white and glittering angel. She had wings spangled with dazzling gold, and came close to my side. She was smiling very sweetly and breathed right in my face. Her breath was like the fragrance of the sweetest roses. Then she threw a shower of roses all over me — great white roses. Her face was just like Bertha Bower's. It was fair and shining, and all the beauty in the world seemed to be in that face. Well, I stooped down to gather up the delicious roses, and suddenly my hands were stuck all full of sharp thistles and thorns that tore and penetrated my flesh. I shrank quickly back and gave a loud shriek, which awoke me and brought me to my senses. Mother, I have been thinking of this dream almost ever since.

Mrs. G. That, my son, was a dream of real life; made up of the roses of hope and the thistles of reality. But we must not think too much of dreams, nor be led by them.

Leon, I know that. I am willing to go to Cincinnati, if you think best. But how can I help thinking of that dream? I suppose I am very absurd; but the thought of being separated from Bertha — I will not try to conceal it from you any longer — the thought is almost too much for me to bear. Of course you will say that I am a very silly youth — that a lad of only

seventeen, ought not to have tangled himself up in the toils of Cupid so desperately. I don't dispute it. But when the eagle or the pheasant is caught in the sportsman's net, no matter how foolishly, his sufferings are none the less painful on that account. I never suspected I was doing wrong to love Bertha. If I only knew that she ever thinks of me for a single moment, as I think of her — if I only knew that she was ever lonely on my account — then I could endure it like a man. Every sound would be like music to my ears; every thing would seem to be dancing for joy; and Nature would all seem lovely and cheerful.

By such words as these did the love-sick boy seek relief and consolation, from a friend that never failed him.

Then did his gentle mother, in tones of tenderness and sympathy, thus admonish and console him: —

"Leon, my son, I have not been ignorant of all this. I have observed your despondency with the yearning of a mother's heart. Fain would I lift the burden from you and bear it in my own bosom. These trials are for your healthful growth and development. Trouble is our needful lesson, which, if we bear it with patience and faith, will give us true wisdom. The good physician sometimes prescribes very bitter doses, in order to save our lives and give us new strength. Unseen hands are pointing our ways for us. If we take good heed and follow their direction, our path will still grow plainer and plainer. Never fear the darkness, my son,

never fear the thunder nor the lightning. Follow the path of duty with unfaltering step — the path that conscience points out. Arm yourself with the panoply of God, and then fear no enemy. Your guardian angel is a truer friend than your own heart — a safer guide than your own longings. If at times you are sorrowful and sad, be thankful. It is only through sorrow that we can ever reach the gates of paradise. If you are never sad, be alarmed; for the good spirit has forsaken you. Both you and Bertha must be tried as by fire. Should your long separation never cool her devotion towards you, then indeed is her love golden — far better than minted treasures. But if time and distance shall blanch your image from her heart, leaving no trace of deep affection — if no wasting sadness shall settle down upon her — then have you suffered no real loss, but have rather secured a timely quittance, and avoided a life-long grief. Herein is Providence your friend — testing your character and proving your fortune, step by step. In the autumn, when Bertha shall return from school, then, perchance, you shall greet her from our new home in the West. Wait, my son, and trust in heaven, like a man.

"Now, Leon, let us improve the time and put our affairs in order. We must convert our little property into money, and prepare for our journey. This business will chiefly devolve upon you. Begin to try your hand as a manager of business."

Leon. Well, mother, I shall see how I can discharge

my trust. I will lose no time about it. To-morrow I must go, the first thing, and dispose of old White-face. This will be quite a strain upon me, to be sure. But business is business. In the next place I shall kill the chickens. But mother, (thoughtfully,) what shall I do with old Chanticleer? I never can cut off *his* head, in the world. O, I know what I will do. I will give him to Bertha's mother. I think good Mrs. Jones will purchase the geese and ducks. You know her mouth is always watering for that kind of property. Please don't speak of our plans and purposes to any one till I have negotiated all the sales. For you understand the weakness of human nature to take a little innocent advantage of necessity. Mrs. Jones, for instance, might feel it her duty to cut our eye teeth for us, if she knew we were *obliged* to sell, and were going to emigrate. Yes, mother, you can trust me to dispose of the things. I am willing to go West if you think best. I know that Bertha is all right. We shall find each other again, sometime, if it takes ten years — that is — if our lives are spared. Mother, keep good courage, I shall stand by you through thick and thin. Now give me a kiss, and let me be off.

In a few days, with great prudence and judgment, Leon had disposed of all their little property, except such useful articles as they could conveniently carry with them. Finally, when they were nearly ready to start, Rosco having, with every appearance of real kindness, rendered them all the necessary assistance,

fulfilled his promise, by purchasing their tickets for the trip and paying for the transportation of their goods; and then by giving, or lending, Mrs. Gaylord two hundred dollars in money. Mrs. Gaylord thanked him, of course, very fervently, and assured him that Leon would pay it all back as soon as possible. She placed this money, together with the amount which they had received from the sale of their things, in her son's hands for safe keeping; advising him not to lose it.

CHAPTER II.

A JOURNEY AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

AT length everything was in readiness, and Leon and his mother, started on their journey for Cincinnati.

The exodus of this family was felt in Charming Valley, as a grave misfortune. Mrs. Gaylord's influence, in that little community, had been as the breezes of the south, bringing early showers. Leon was highly esteemed by everybody. His genial presence was everywhere welcome, and at all times. When they departed, it was almost as if some member of each family was dead, for it was understood by every one that they had gone from the Valley, to return no more.

Winding over the mountains and shooting through the valleys, upon the thundering, jerking train, Leon was overwhelmed with wonder and delight. The scenery upon the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh route is grand and varied beyond description. Being to the fresh and ardent temperament of Leon altogether new, he was captivated beyond everything he had ever experienced or conceived. Although his heart was full of sadness — for Charming Valley? No. For his life-long home and his childhood's associations? No. For fear of meeting strangers and the dread of battling

with the world in some new and untried field? No, no. For the loss of Bertha Bower, the charm of Charming Valley? Yes! Still he could not help but enjoy this magnificent panorama.

The excitement of their preparation for the journey and the stream of stupendous novelties which rushed along in bewildering succession, flooding his mind almost to distraction, had the effect of silencing the voice of grief for the time being.

Leon's soul was oppressed by the grandeur of the mountains. For hours together he sat by the car window, peering off upon the vast and varied landscapes — upon their green and gorgeous foregrounds and their dim, blue distances — in forgetfulness of himself and everything that appertained to him. He almost felt ashamed to regard himself or his personal troubles as of any consequence whatever, in the presence of the awful and inspiring scenery which unrolled and spread out before him, like a glorious panoramic dream.

With the swiftness of a dream it passed away. For in the evening of the day upon which they had left Philadelphia, they found themselves in the city of Pittsburg; ready to embark the next morning upon the steamboat, for Cincinnati.

It was a night of fatigue and rest, both for Leon and his mother. The embers in his heart — the embers of grief and bitterness — also slept quietly. But those embers were not dead. The depth and the height, the

intensity and force, of which they were capable, were then utterly unknown — as unknown to Leon as to the innocent and indifferent passenger. Business now crowded upon him and demanded his dutiful attention. Duty, with him, had no rival. Mrs. Gaylord had been heard to say that she would venture her life, that if Leon were put to the test, he would not hesitate to suffer martyrdom rather than violate his plain duty. Upon the question of duty he had no aptness for compromise, in his nature — either in the form of friendship, fear, or self-love. In his after life this trait in his character was brought to the test a thousand times over. His mother was perfectly safe in offering to pledge her life against its violability.

Early next morning they were safely on board the steamer, with their boxes and trunks; soon the vessel had weighed anchor and was speeding down the river.

For some time, Leon and his mother were absorbed by the new scenery which flitted by them, as the stalwart craft moved down the Ohio. The air was all in commotion, and the villages and hills echoed with the melodious strains of the band. Mrs. Gaylord was disposed to be happy, and to make the most of this opportunity. She tried with all her might to sustain Leon also, in his efforts to be cheerful and to enjoy the glorious voyage. She sadly discovered, through his transparent features, and his tremulous voice, that his heart was aching. She painfully felt that her endeavors were all in vain; and that he must work out the problem for

himself and in his own way. Presently he was missing from her side. Had she followed him to the narrow and secluded passage between the heaps of corded freight, and witnessed his agony, and heard him sob and grieve as though he were standing beside the grave of his dearest friend, her courage might have failed her; and she might have regretted their undertaking. She was spared that painful scene. She knew of Leon's trouble, of course; but had no conception of its bitter depths.

What is beauty, what is music, what the fragrance of Eden, when the head is throbbing? What is all the pleasure, wealth, or glory of the world, when the heart is ready to burst with grief? As the light upon the nerve of vision, when vexed with burning inflammation only causes an increase of suffering — only makes the darkness more intense — so the broad and shining expanse of water and the green islands now and then flashing by them, so the fresh and cooling breezes and the dazzling radiance of the heavens, so the melting strains of music, the ever-varying scenery through which they passed and the ringing cheer upon the floating palace around them, threw upon the shattered heart of Leon, many dreary and dismal reflections, and many darkening and chilling shadows — heart so true, so ingenuous, and so fervid, of the noble, sensitive Leon, heart so painfully bruised, so cruelly hurt and so kneenly aching.

* * * * * *

There was an old man upon the boat, who seemed to

be travelling alone and in poverty. Yet there was a sparkle in his eye and a peculiarly sad and touching expression upon his wrinkled face. In the course of the afternoon he seemed to take special notice of the young man and to be attracted by him. So, as he came along upon the upper deck where Leon was sitting alone, he gently approached him and took a seat by his side.

"My boy," said he, "what is the matter? Are you travelling away from your sweet-heart, from necessity? or has she turned her back upon you?"

Leon looked upon him with astonishment, and even with awe.

"Come now," said the man, "tell me about your troubles. Perhaps I can be of service to you. I have been through the mills myself—the mills of the gods—and have been ground into powder — ground very slow, but exceedingly fine. You are just beginning life. It is only now and then that the gods find a subject fit for their purpose. It is a great distinction to be selected for the hopper of the gods. It is only here and there one, whom the gods take up. They are very few and far between. Come, my dear boy — for I am sure that I distinguish their mark upon you — tell me your trouble, and let me settle the question that disturbs you. I can do it. With a little more insight — just a little — I can settle the whole question for you, I am sure. You perceive I am blest with old age. I have been a favorite of the gods all through. In all my years, I have met with very few that were marked

for immortality. I have read of quite a large number, it is true, reaching back through history, and the different nations of the globe. But the great multitudes of people, making up the commercial, the fashionable and the political worlds, are nothing but chaff and refuse. I trust I can save you much suspense and quiet your mind."

These words were uttered rapidly, and with a strangely fascinating effect upon Leon's mind. He became at once very much interested in the old man — almost accepting him as an oracle, and what he had said as an inspired revelation. The eyes of the old fellow seemed to glow with kindness and love; and his tones were wonderfully winning to Leon's ear. He had no power, as he had no disposition, to resist his influence.

For several moments Leon was awe-struck and speechless. He soon recovered himself, and then proceeded to give a brief, but eloquent and tearful history, of his uneventful life; dwelling largely, of course, upon his love for Bertha Bower, and upon his unhappy separation from her; together with the manner in which it had been effected; which seemed to him very strange, if not cruel. He expressed his faith in God, however, who, he believed, would do all things well.

After Leon had finished his narrative, the old man, with a strange, mysterious flourish, and with great solemnity, drawing close to Leon, and even taking him by the hand, as if to impart some magical influence, thus replied:

"I am delighted, my son, to have my first impressions of you all confirmed, and sealed as correct. The experience which you have recited, proves to my mind, beyond all doubt, that you are one of the elect. You have lost your Bertha, but you will find her again, with great tribulation. I have a message to deliver you, which may serve to sustain you in your future trials. Remember, the gods afflict those, and those only, whom they love. Many persons, in whom the gods take no interest whatever, are afflicted by themselves or by enemies. That is of no account. When trouble comes from above, as it were from the elements, and the air, it is a proof of divine favor — a seal of divine election and selection — a certificate of stock in the bank of Eternity. You are to suffer great reverses, disappointments and crosses, in your future life—losses, bereavements, persecutions and perchance, imprisonments. These things will come upon you from the skies. I have suffered them myself, and I rejoice in them all; for I regard them as proof positive of the crown which is held in reversion for me. Should you chance to meet with some signal misfortune, even this very day, which might seem to be without any cause, as it were, let it be the source of delight to you, for it will be a sign — nay a confirmation strong as holy writ — that my convictions and predictions are true, and that you are really a favorite of the gods."

When the old man had arrived at this point in his speech, the steamer was landing at Maysville, Ken-

tucky. Suddenly, giving Leon an affectionate grasp of the hand, he bade him adieu, hastily stepped upon the shore, and disappeared in the crowd. Presently, the vessel was released from the dock and proceeded on her voyage.

Leon had become greatly excited, and even dazed, by the strange talk and actions of the stranger. After the exit of that person, he rejoined his mother. Seeing the state of excitement her boy was in, it was very natural for Mrs. Gaylord to inquire into the cause.

Leon very frankly gave her a circumstantial account of the old man's conversation, singular appearance and mysterious behavior. When he had concluded his eloquent description, his mother very coolly suggested that in all probability the old codger was a professional sharper and pick-pocket. She advised Leon to examine the exchequer, as he was the treasurer of the expedition and was responsible for the safe keeping of the funds, all of which he carried upon his individual person.

Instantly, upon this suggestion, Leon made the appalling discovery that he had been robbed — not only of all his money, but also of the dear little gold watch and chain, which to him was a most invaluable keepsake, left him by his long-deceased father.

If the failure of the Bank of England had been an actual occurrence in the commercial world, the announcement of that fact would no doubt have produced disturbance in a vastly larger number of bosoms,

but it is difficult to comprehend how greater consternation could have been the result in any two bosoms, than the discovery of this loss of two hundred and fifty dollars produced in Leon Gaylord and his mother. The loss they felt to be absolute and irreparable. The money was gone beyond hope of recovery. True, their passage to Cincinnati was secured, and their boxes and trunks remained intact; but, otherwise, they were destitute — among strangers and in a strange land.

Now they were brought face to face, with stern, frowning and very terrific realities. Their mental resources — their ingenuity — the prudence and wisdom of Mrs. Gaylord and the sagacity, and inexperienced genius of Leon — were in immediate and pressing demand, and were called into vigorous exercise. In a few hours they would be standing upon the dock of a great city, empty-handed strangers. Leon was dumbfounded. He was overwhelmed with new grief, and with chagrin and mortification to boot. His good mother, seeing his great distress, never gave him an unkind word or look. She treated their loss simply as misfortune — very grave and serious, to be sure — but as an inevitable fatality. Now what was to be done? Very sensibly, she proposed to write immediately to good Rosco Bower; informing him of their untoward predicament, imploring him for aid, to prevent the absolute necessity of their immediate return to Charming Valley. Observing his mother's gentle and unaccusing spirit, Leon proudly and bravely objected

to this proposal; feeling that the humiliation would be too great.

"Mother," said he, "you can trust me *yet*. I believe that I am equal to the emergency."

"My boy," said Mrs. Gaylord, "you cannot expect to raise money in a strange land, without *seed*, any more than you could raise grain without seed, upon fallow ground."

Leon. Mother, that is a very shrewd comparison, I must confess. But it is nothing but sophistry. Money is not like other plants. Wheat is not convertible into rye, nor rye into corn. Money is convertible into rye, wheat and corn, and every thing under the sun. Every thing under the sun is convertible into money. I have a little something in reserve, which I propose to convert into that article. When we arrive at Cincinnati, I shall make the attempt, and I mean to succeed. For the time being, I find I have a little change which the *gods* have spared me — just a few shillings — with which to meet the expenses of one day; and to-morrow, I propose to do something to retrieve my character.

Mrs. G. Suppose that you fail, what then will become of us?

Leon. Mother, I tell you there is no such word as fail. *I have got to succeed.*

Mrs. G. My brave son, what is your plan?

Leon. I have no plan, mother, but I have *faith.* That is all I can tell you now.

The next morning, after a night upon the steamer, not quite as restful and happy as they could have wished, they found themselves at the wharf in Cincinnati. However, Leon was bright and smiling, while Mrs. Gaylord was calm and sober. There was more anxiety in her mind than appeared upon the surface.

After making a temporary disposition of the baggage, Leon conducted his mother to a neat little restaurant in that vicinity, where, after partaking of a frugal breakfast, he besought her to remain there as patiently as possible, till his return, as he intended to look about the city in search of relief; promising to return to her in the course of the day — perhaps before noon.

Mrs. Gaylord knew that he was a boy of remarkable executive capacity, yet trembled and almost broke down, at the thought of his undertaking such a hopeless task, and she tried to persuade him that the only proper thing for them to do was to write as she had before proposed, to Rosco Bower. He would not hear a word to that.

"Have no fear, mother," said he. "I ask but one day to regain your confidence. After that, I will submit to any thing whatever you prescribe."

To this proposition, Mrs. Gaylord, with tears in her eyes, at length consented. Then, cautioning him against the dangers of the city, she fixed him up as well as she could, under the circumstances, and he started off on his strange, quixotic adventure.

He wandered leisurely up and down the streets, for

several hours, inspecting the immense blocks of stores and public buildings, and wondering at the grandeur of the churches and parks, and almost every thing else. All this time he was striving to decide upon some course of action. He stepped into various stores and business places in different streets, as if trying to find some kind of business that he might be competent to do. But he said nothing, and nobody knows what he thought.

At length, passing an immense structure of brown stone, he was so much overcome by its magnificence and architectural grandeur, that for some minutes, he stood over against it on the street in downright amazement. Inside one of the great windows, he observed a little gilt sign, with these words—"Bank Open." Leon was a boy of quick thought and bold conclusions. He stood there and reasoned in his mind. "That must be a bank," he thought. He understood the nature of such an institution, for he had been in the Charming Valley bank, though a small affair, hundreds of times. He knew all about that. "Now," says he to himself, "I must begin somewhere, and why not here? The day is wearing away, and my condition, to-night, will be deplorable enough, if I accomplish nothing to-day."

Thus he stood for some time, screwing up his courage to the sticking point. Finally he succeeded in that. Then he tried to assume a manly, business-like air, and boldly mounted the massive stone steps and entered the bank. Walking upon the marble floor, looking up at the

lofty ceilings and all the grand display of architecture, on a scale so different from any thing he had ever seen before, and seeing so many fine gentlemen passing in and out, he felt his own dimensions to be much reduced, and his courage almost failed him. Still he was self-possessed. Some of his mother's lessons came to his mind, and sustained his spirit. She had taught him to fear no man living; but to hold himself equal, in the social scale, to any other man, be he prince or president. He approached a young gentleman whom he saw behind the counter, and politely inquired if he, (the youthful individual,) were the President of the institution. The clerk smiled and told him that if he had business with the President, he would probably find General Proctor in the next room.

Nothing daunted, Leon pursued his way into the President's room, and stood in the presence of General Proctor. As he stood there, with a peculiarly anxious and sad expression of face, the official was apparently surprised, his newspaper lying in his lap, his spectacled eyes looking over the glasses, to have a better view, not a word being spoken for some time, on either side. The bank president gave the youth a very searching look. Still it was not a look of severity or heartlessness. The lad, desperate in his condition, brave in his conscious honesty, and with faith in the good Spirit above, modestly waited till he felt that it was full time for him to speak.

Naturally, Leon had a very pleasing voice and

enunciation. Being now in a tremulous frame of mind, his expressions were even more tender and plaintive than usual. He also naturally was graceful and polite in his manners and address. So, when he had spoken a sentence or two, the banker was touched, in spite of himself; and he soon became interested in the boy.

"I hope, sir, you will forgive me," said Leon, "for being so bold. If you only knew about my trouble, I am sure you would."

As he said this, the tears came gushing out of his eyes like rain. With an obvious effort he soon suppressed his emotions, and then proceeded.

"We arrived here this morning—my mother and I. We came here from Charming Valley, in the eastern part of Pennsylvania. We had two hundred and fifty dollars, in money, when we started from home. We have come here to stay and live. On the steamer this money was stolen from us—all but a few shillings. My mother is the noblest lady you ever saw; and I cannot bear the thought of her suffering. If you will lend me this amount, good sir, or a part of it, you need not fear but I shall pay it all back to you. Or I will work for you till it is all paid up—and leave it out to you."

By this time the banker's feelings were considerably moved; not only by the boy's simple story, but also by the touching manner in which it was told.

"Young man," said he, "what kind of work can you do?"

Straightening up his figure, with an intellectual glow in his face," "I can do almost any thing," said Leon.

" Let me see you write a little," said the banker.

Quickly, Leon sat down by the table, picked up a pen, and rapidly wrote two or three lines very neatly, without any nonsensical flourishes, and then finished by writing his own name. The banker was completely won by Leon's prompt and artless manner.

" Go and bring your mother here, my brave fellow," said he," and if I find her the noblest lady that ever I saw, you shall have the money, and I will try you in the bank."

Leon almost laughed right out with delight, and thanked the gentleman with his whole heart and soul. Then he took his hat and bowed himself out of the room, saying he would return with his mother just as soon as he could.

When Leon came to his mother it was nearly noon. Would that the reader might see a photograph of those two faces — could such have been taken but a moment previous to Leon's return — one so radiant with joy, and the other so almost frightful with anxiety and apprehension.

After Leon had left her in the morning, the dangers and sufferings pictured to herself, by Mrs. Gaylord, which the dear boy was liable to encounter in the streets of that immense city, so utterly unused to city life as he was, made her feel guilty almost beyond

forgiveness, for allowing the only being in the world that she loved, thus to expose himself, with scarcely the possibility of any good result, and so many probabilities of disaster. That was a dreadful forenoon to her. When Leon's bright and happy face came before her again, glowing with gladness and triumph, she thought she had never seen so lovely a sight. For a few moments she cared nothing at all about the results of his excursion. To her, his safe return was success enough. She was satisfied with just that and nothing more—satisfied and happy. The world and life just then, were very beautiful indeed, to her. When Leon came to tell her of his good fortune and all about the gentleman in the bank, it seemed to her like a pleasant dream. Such fortune hardly seemed possible to her as a reality.

She soon came to her senses, for Leon urged her to lose no time, but to go with him to the Bank and receive the money which had been promised them—promised upon the condition that she should prove the noblest lady he had ever seen. This condition, however, Leon omitted to tell his mother; whether from forgetfulness or from discreet judgment, is not exactly known. But if it were from forgetfulness, he was under an auspicious star. If it were deliberate judgment, it was very sound and discreet, for a boy of his tender age; for it is not a human possibility for a lady unused to the dramatic stage, to have made so good an impression upon any sensible stranger, as Mrs.

Gaylord made upon the banker, had she been aware that the stranger was advertised in advance of her beauty and grace.

It was afternoon when Leon and his mother entered the bank together, proceeding directly into the room of the President, whom they found engaged for the moment in business; but he motioned them to be seated, and was soon ready to talk with them. He proved to be a man of sterling qualities. Whether he considered Leon's estimate of his mother entirely correct or not, he did not then and there affirm. But his actions, (which are said to speak plainer than words,) indicated that the boy's description was not at all overdrawn, in his opinion.

They had a long interview, in which the Banker learned more of their history, more of their voyage, and more of their object in coming west. He reviewed his conversation with Leon in the forenoon, confessing the peculiarly favorable impression the boy had made on him, and went so far as to say that he found this impression fully confirmed. He handed Mrs. Gaylord the two hundred and fifty dollars which they so much needed; and then gave her his advice with regard to starting life in Cincinnati. He told Leon to come and commence his service in the bank just as soon as they were properly settled, and promised him a fair salary.

Mrs. Gaylord, of course, expressed her gratitude in the most impressive and graceful manner; and assured him this sentiment would remain in her heart as long

as her life should be spared. It may as well be stated here, lest it might be forgotten, that she has thus far kept her word. She has never failed, upon the anniversary of this important event in her life, to prove in some manner, to General Nathan Proctor, the banker, who befriended them at the time of their greatest need, that the memory of that holy act has been kept ever fresh in her heart.

CHAPTER III.

AT SCHOOL AND HOME AGAIN.

BERTHA BOWER was successful in her studies to a degree which surprised both her teachers and her classmates. But while she was mounting the hill of Science with the most marvellous rapidity, leaving behind her classmates and even teachers — especially in Music, Drawing, Sculpture and History, her health seemed to decline. Her spirit was cheerless, and her countenance dejected. But she never complained. Some, and especially her uncle, thought her too much absorbed in her studies, still she never appeared wearied nor tired — never missed a recitation. She exercised well and regularly, and took the morning air. No one suspected Cupid of having a hand in the matter — at least no one suggested such an idea. Notably she grew thin, pale, and unsocial, but she never informed her friends at home of her changed appearance. From week to week she quietly hushed her sorrow — silent and uncomplaining — writing home only of her studies, of her teachers so kind and gentle, and of her classmates so dear and charming.

The Fall term closed with the first week in November. To Bertha had been assigned, for her thesis, the subject of *Female Suffrage;* and though brief and

unpretending, her address was regarded at that early stage of the discussion, as something worthy of praise. It was published in several of the city papers, and also in papers out of the city. The following extract was the closing portion of it:

By no kind of logic, worthy of the name, can it be shown that the female sex should not be allowed the same voice in the Government as that accorded to the male, except upon the assumed and most outrageous premises, that it is the true policy of Government to keep that sex in the position of an inferior class. All analogy as well as experience proves that the denial of a privilege or right, to any class of citizens, has the effect not only to degrade the moral and intellectual condition of that class, but also to derange all the relations, and damage all the interests of the Commonwealth. Society, though numerous and complicated in its parts, is but a unit — *e pluribus unum.* Its relations and interests are interwoven and indivisible. All its members are absolutely equal in their rights. The contrary doctrine is a blasphemous insult to God, and so long as it prevails, its reactionary consequences will be sadly disastrous to the world. As no essential portion of the animal system can be deprived of its normal freedom of action without causing a disturbance of the vital energies, an impairment of the functions of life and the ultimate decadence of the individual, so it is absurd to presume that one half of the body politic can be fettered or restricted in its rights, without seriously prejudicing the well being of the whole.

It is generally admitted by the ruling sex, that should the masses of women earnestly demand the right of suffrage,

that right should no longer be withheld. Now it must be through some kind of magic — like that, perhaps, which gives the Arabian Nights their inspiration — that a right can be brought into existence by the simple asking for it. If female suffrage is an inherent right, based on the eternal principles of Justice and Equality, it is difficult to understand how the fiat of woman can create it, or the tyrant's wand destroy it. Never will it be known, until this right is fully enjoyed, and its fruits have been fully realized, how much the country and the world have suffered, directly and indirectly, by its long-continued suppression. The evil extends not merely to the moral state of society, but also to the physical condition of the race. By driving woman out of the sphere of public duty and responsibility, into the shallow and dangerous channel of Fashion and Frivolity, the entire constitution of the race, both physical and mental, is sadly impaired, and the influence of Woman is altogether too negative towards the good, and too positive in the direction of evil.

When the dawning of the glorious day arrived — a lovely day in the sweet month of November — lovely at least in the estimation of Bertha — fairer than the time of early roses — of all days the sweetest in Bertha's life-time — day appointed to start for home, for Charming Valley — how cheerful was the sleety morning! how refreshing was the bleak north wind! how delightful were the slippery crossings! For the thought of Leon Gaylord, and the assurance she felt, that soon, very soon, she would be looking into the heaven of his

eyes, and be hearing the magic music of his voice again, were like the balm in Gilead to the wounded spirit, like the cooling fountain to Bertha's thirsty and famished soul, — like cheering sunshine to her heart.

It was a happy meeting when Bertha met her father and mother at the homestead in Charming Valley. For a few moments it was exceeding joyous and happy. But when they discovered the change which marked her features, once so fresh and cheerful, now so thin, pale and careworn, they were shocked and deeply saddened in their hearts.

They received her with the utmost demonstrations of affection. Tears and smiles of gladness and joy, words of mutual kindness and love coming fresh and warm from all hearts, flowed from their eyes, shone upon their faces, and fell from their lips. Too transient were those blissful moments — moments so rare, so heavenly, so transient!

Mrs. Bower. Welcome home, our precious Bertha! Most anxiously have we waited for you. Abundant welcome to our home and our hearts.

Bertha. O dearest mamma, it seems just like heaven to get home. I am sure I was never so happy before — never in my life.

Rosco. Now Bertha dear, do not give all your attention to mamma. Let me see if it is my own dear Bertha.

Mrs. B. Why, my sweet child! you cannot be well. You are so pale and emaciated! How long have you been ill, dearest Bertha?

Bertha. O, I am not ill, dear mamma, but I have studied very hard, and have been so lonely.

Mrs. B. Well, you shall rest now, my child, and shall not be lonely any more.

Rosco. No, Bertha, we will not let you be lonely any more, and you shall stay with us at home. You are worth more to us than all the learning in Philadelphia.

Bertha. I have improved the time the best I could, papa, and have improved myself very much indeed. When the term closed, they said I was the very best in the Institute, for my age.

Rosco. But, dear daughter, I fear you have done yourself serious injury, by such severe application. You really are looking quite thin.

Bertha. But I shall soon get over that, papa, if I can only rest a little. I feel better already. O, I am so happy to get home and see you again, my sweet father and mother. [They kiss again all round, and Bertha and her mother both laugh and cry.]

Mrs. B. We must not let it be known, Bertha dear, that you are at home, or the whole Valley will rush in to see you. The house will be thronged, and *we* shall be kept in the back ground.

Bertha. Well, mamma, I shall want to see every body. But where is Leon Gaylord? Is he well? And Leon's mother — are they both well?

Rosco. They have gone away, Bertha — both of them. They have moved to Cincinnati.

Bertha. [Much agitated.] Moved to Cincinnati,

dear father? Then I must go and see them at once. Surely, I must go to-morrow.

Rosco. O, that cannot possibly be, dear daughter, for it is far beyond the mountains — far towards the sunset and the great Pacific ocean.

Then did Bertha scream aloud in anguish — in a transport of bitter and troubled anguish, for her heart did seem at the very point of breaking, as from unforeseen and sudden bereavement.

As in dark and chilling waters, where the waves roll and the winds are boisterous, dangers increase and hopes are extinguished, till there is no more reaction, so the striving and hopeful spirit, when overstrained by anxious waiting, by disappointment and deferred hope, sinks at last, and gives up the struggle.

That household was quickly translated from joy, to terror and dismay — from pleasing anticipations to very dreary forebodings. For Bertha was alarmingly ill from that hour. She fell into a dangerous fever, which for many days kept her trembling in the mortal balance — betwixt life and death. Her delicate nervous system, after such extreme and continuous tension, was unequal to the shock which this sad intelligence gave her. The idol of her heart — the central magnet of all her hopes and aspirations in this life, had been rudely snatched away, and her affections were so drawn and twined around it, that when the painful truth was first brought to her knowledge, it had well nigh shaken her soul from its mortal casket.

Medical skill seemed powerless to save her. Hour after hour her strength failed, and her senses grew dim, and her friends were anxiously and tearfully watching by her bed.

But hark! Here comes a letter — a letter for Bertha Bower.

"Doctor Goodsoul, may we speak to her of this letter? Will it be safe for her to see it?"

"Yes, she may see it if possible. Let her take it in her hand and hold it. If her mind have sufficient consciousness, happily it may give her new life. But our hopes are trembling and faint. We fear that no earthly means will save or even revive her."

A fever! This is a sad sound. To the ear of the laity it is simply dreadful, and but little if any less to the professional ear. It makes light of all human skill, and laughs at learning and research. All the doctors of the world, from Æsculapius to Hahnemann, have been set at naught by this fearful malady. It heeds not the batteries of science or of genius, of history, of pathology or of chemistry. In all climates and in all ages, it has been the same impervious and confounding mystery. And to-day, after so many centuries of civilization, and the accumulation of such immense quantities of facts and cases, "hands off," is the best counsel that can be given to subdue it. The *expectant plan* of treatment — that is, the plan of waiting on Nature, without interference — is the most profoundly wise and the most learnedly professional, of all plans, to-day.

Swiftly was Bertha's life sinking. But when her quick ear caught the sound of those words — those welcome words — *a letter for Bertha* — instantly she raised her eyelids.

"Please, dearest father, let me see it." Thus, with great exertion, she breathed, in the softest whisper. "Show me the superscription." Then she raised her hand and took the letter. "See! it is post marked Cincinnati. Surely it must be from Leon Gaylord!"

Quickly, now, her senses revived; and she nervously grasped the letter with her hand. Quickly and firmly she grasped and held it. Then, with the most surprising pathos, while the pillow was wet with her hot tears, she spake, quite audibly:

"Thanks to my Heavenly Father, Leon Gaylord has not forgotten his Bertha."

Most earnestly and kindly, did her anxious father now attempt to take the letter from her hand.

"No, my dear father, please forgive me. I shall keep it here in my bosom. And, father dearest, I shall surely read it."

"Daughter, dear, it may do you an injury. It may overtax your strength. Let us lay it in your bureau for a day or two, when your nerves may be stronger and better able to bear the effort."

Vain and idle was all persuasion. With a mortal grasp she still held it firmly, and kept it. With a sweet, pleading smile, she persistently refused to surrender the letter.

"Papa, I know what I am about. This is *my* letter, and I shall keep it." This she said in a much stronger tone of voice than she had spoken in before. Then, to the astonishment of all present, she suddenly rose and sat up in bed.

Thus, the over-matched contestant, at the very point of yielding to the adversary, when he hears the welcome tidings of approaching aid and reinforcement, flies to action with renewed courage — to action, to battle and to victory.

Dr. Goodsoul. Thank God! the crisis is past. This is a marvellous cure. This patient is surely convalescent. Now give her a little milk or beef tea. This is a great mystery, we frankly confess. A mystery before which men are nothing but mere children, and the savants are but little better than ignoramuses. This change, so instantaneous, so astonishing and so delightful, seems to have taken place, after all our mountain-labor, all our waste of learning and medical skill, and after all our watching and praying, from the most simple and inadequate cause — as if in sheer mockery of professional learning and all human effort. This little letter, though it has not even been opened as yet, seems to have stopped the sweeping current of the fever and killed it stone dead. Isn't it too bad! After such an imposing array of science, wisdom and skill, from great libraries of musty lore, and from so many hoary, scholastic brains, in both college and council, with their professorships, degrees and Latin literature,

and after all the anxious and prayerful yearning of so many affectionate hearts — all together like a bannered army of Israelites, with their thundering batteries, fleeing or surrendering, frightened, before the terrible Goliath of this fever — and then the little stripling David, with his ridiculous little sling of this unopened letter, coming carelessly, or providentially along, and with one whirl of the unpretending little weapon, bringing down the huge Philistine, cutting off his great head and filling our Israelitish hearts with joy and gratitude!

Bertha. Mamma, you can give me the milk-punch now. I am just ready for it. (They give her a full goblet of milk-punch, and she drinks it down before once taking it from her lips.) That's the kind of doctor that suits *me*.

Dr. Goodsoul. Now let her be kept very quiet to-day — taking her milk-punch and beef-tea every hour, alternately. Bertha must be a good patient now and lie down. Let the room be very quiet and no one admitted to see her. We shall look in again this evening, of course.

In the course of the afternoon, Bertha was so much improved that she was left for an hour or two in the exclusive care of Miss Kline, the nurse. And no sooner was the room all quiet and this lady had taken her seat at the bed-side, than Bertha, very beseechingly requested her to break the envelope and read the letter to her. But Miss Kline, like a good and reliable nurse,

was very much shocked, of course, by such a proposal. It would be very wrong indeed — and unprofessional— for her to take such responsibility without the explicit consent of the doctor, or, at the very least, of her mother. But that consent was not in accord with Bertha's plan. She feared that if the question should be referred to either of those functionaries, the verdict would go against her. So she told Miss Kline that if she would only read her the letter, like a good nurse, and let no one know of it, she should have a nice lace collar which she, (Bertha,) had in her drawer, just as soon as she was able to be dressed, and go to her bureau.

Miss K. But won't your mother turn me away, if she finds it out?

Bertha. No, my dear nurse. I will see about that, myself. Here's the letter now, there's a good nurse.

Now Miss Kline, with palpable misgivings of mind— whether from conscientious or from selfish considerations, who knows? — took the letter from Bertha's hand, and proceeded in the precise direction of Bertha's wishes. And it was a grand and triumphant success, as far as Bertha was concerned — nay, it proved to be an entirely harmless transaction everyway. Moreover, Bertha did not eventually forget her promise to Miss Kline with regard to the lace collar.

But the reader is entitled to a copy of the letter. And here it is in full — word for word — as Miss Kline read it to Bertha:

"CINCINNATI, NOVEMBER 1ST.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, BERTHA BOWER:—I am here—mother and I—in this great noisy city. I think of you, my dearest Bertha, every day—nay, every hour and every minute. O that I could see you! Little did I think, when we parted, where the winds of heaven would drive me. Little did I realize how much I loved you. What the reason was of our coming here, puzzles me greatly. And not only me, it puzzles mother also. She thinks that some time or other we shall understand about it. She feels sure that our Heavenly Father knows the reason why we were brought here. Mother feels perfectly well and happy, and I love her dearly. Indeed I love her next to my own precious Bertha. O, if you, Bertha, were only here with us, I should need no other heaven. Hardly, dearest Bertha, did I dare to write you. But I must tell you something now. Perhaps you will smile and think me childish. But I must venture to tell you what I was dreaming, only last night. I was dreaming of a lovely casket. It was made of solid and brightly burnished gold; and it held a priceless diamond. I felt sure it was all mine, and I was standing closely beside it, with the most delicious pleasure. Next, I heard a frightful voice, speaking thus: 'Leon, Leon, come, you must be going.' As I turned toward the voice, the casket vanished. Then was my heart most grievously wounded; and in great sorrow I went far away. For years and years I wandered afar through desert woods and through dangerous places, searching for hidden treasures. None that I ever found was half so lovely, as my own, my golden casket which I had lost. But after many years had passed, suddenly it rose again before me—this glorious casket, containing the peerless

diamond. Then my troubles were all over; for I had found my priceless treasure which had been lost. Then a voice all unlike the one which I had heard before, spake in sweet, heavenly accents, thrilling every nerve within me: 'Leon, where now is your Bertha?' Then I awoke and thought, surely, I must write to-morrow, to my own, my darling Bertha; for she must now be about returning from her school in Philadelphia.

"Now please write me, dearest Bertha, my more than sister — write and lift away this darkness. Write and give me joyful sunshine. For my heart is forever thine.

"Thine for ever,

"Leon Gaylord."

By the time the nurse had finished reading the letter, Bertha's fever had all departed, as by magic, and a kindly, genial moisture proved her decided convalescence. Leon's letter rescued her from the grasp of Death. It came as an angel of love, "with healing in his wings," giving her new life in exuberance.

Now Bertha was sitting bolt upright in bed. "That," says she, "is a most beautiful letter. No, beautiful is not the word. It is downright *lovely*. Now, my dear nurse, come and let me kiss you, and then I can be dressed, for I am determined to sit up this very afternoon."

(Enter Mrs. Bower.) "Bertha, my dear," said Mrs. Bower, emphasizing each word, "what is this you are doing? Lie right down."

Bertha. (Not seeming to notice the request.)

Mamma, I have such a delightful letter from Leon Gaylord! Nurse has been reading it to me, and it has just about made me well. Can I have some beef-tea, mamma, right away?

Mrs. B. Why, my dear child, this is very alarming. You will certainly have a relapse; and then what shall we do? Miss Kline, I am really surprised and shocked, that you should have done such a thing.

Bertha. Mamma, you may read the dear letter, if you wish to. But papa must not see it; for I'm afraid he will be offended about it.

Mrs. B. No, my dear child, he will not be offended at any thing, if you only get well. But you must not be so excited.

Bertha. Mamma, dear, I am well already. This letter has positively cured me. I am all ready now for music and beef-tea.

(Enter Rosco.) With a look of alarm and consternation, says Rosco: What does this all mean? My dear child, this will never do. You will have us all in tears again. You must not get well so fast. It is very dangerous. Dr. Goodsoul will object to it, no doubt.

Bertha. Papa, I am very hungry indeed; and nobody will give me any thing at all.

(Enter Dr. Goodsoul.) "Why Bertha," says the doctor, "how bright you are!" (Feeling her pulse.)

Bertha. (Almost crying.) Dear Dr. Goodsoul, must I be starved to death?

Dr. Goodsoul. Not by any means, Bertha. Nurse, give her all the milk and beef-tea she wants; for I pronounce her fairly out of danger and rapidly convalescing.

In this way the apprehensions of the parents were quieted; and all the child had to do was to eat and drink all that was brought to her, and to gain strength from hour to hour. Miss Kline was vastly relieved by the Doctor's assurances; for she had been trembling lest her reading the letter to Bertha should have brought a relapse upon the patient and disgrace upon herself.

Now for some time, Miss Kline was Bertha's constant attendant; for company, for amusement and for assistance. They were alone much of the time. Of course, Bertha could think of hardly anything else than Leon Gaylord and the dear letter she had received from him. She mused upon it by day and dreamed of it by night. Whatever the reader may think about it, Dr. Goodsoul believed that this letter saved Bertha's life. And for years and years afterwards, he not only related the case to his friends, both professional and non-professional, as a beautiful and most striking one in illustration of the value of moral medical treatment in certain forms of disease; but he regarded it of so much importance in a scientific and professional view, that he published a careful and very interesting account of it in one of the Medical Journals of the day, with some very able deductions and comments of his own.

That the mind and body are one, or that they are bound together by some link, or perhaps by some chain of a thousand links, which has properties in common with both body and mind, could hardly be established by stronger proof than this case of Bertha Bower. However, we have proof of the same kind—which, being so common, is less impressive — in every movement of the body directed by the will. Man, not only, is one, but the universe, including God Himself, and all the glorious heavens — nay, earth and hell, and all the men and devils in existence, is, and inevitably must be — one; in the same sense that a train of cars is one. There must be a connecting link between cause and effect — between every cause and its effect, everywhere and anywhere — between every cause and every effect, through an infinitely complicated network of connections — and between the First Cause and all effects — that is to say — between God and all things whatsoever in the universe — as really and positively as a train of cars and locomotive must be connected together by coupling links.

Not to run off any farther into metaphysics, this letter of Leon's, as a matter of course, had to be answered. So in two or three days after Miss Kline had read it to Bertha, they were sitting side by side, Bertha in her easy chair, at an hour of the day when they were not very liable to interruptions, when Bertha thus broke out:

"Now my sweet nurse, you see I am quite well.

And you see that it did no harm at all, but rather a world of good, to have you read that lovely letter the other day. Don't you honestly think that I have been much better on account of it? I know Dr. Goodsoul does, from what I heard him say to papa. Please go now, my dearest nurse, and bring here my portfolio. You will find it in my second bureau drawer. Then I will tell you something else that Bertha wants you to do."

Miss Kline very promptly responded to the young lady's request, by bringing her the portfolio.

Bertha. Now please sit down here by Bertha and she will tell you just what to write down. You know you are such a very nice writer. Don't speak about this, please, dear nurse; for the letter I am going to write is a secret not to be divulged for any thing. For papa says I must not correspond with Leon Gaylord at present. So I am just going to write to Leon to let him know what papa says, and that he must not expect to hear from me again until I am eighteen, which will be in less than two years from this time.

Miss Kline. I am afraid you will be the worse for this, dear Bertha, and then what will be done with me?

Bertha. Never fear in the least about that. I am quite well you see. That letter of dear Leon's filled me with electricity, and electricity is the very essence of health. This and a great many other things I learned at school. Now, my dear, please write down just what I tell you. (Miss Kline obeys, like a machine, and

writes the sentences and parts of sentences, from Bertha's lips.) "First the date.

"CHARMING VALLEY, NOV. 10—

"MY DEAR LEON:—My more than brother—it was your own—your sweet letter—that saved me. Leon dear—I was dying. I heard mamma say—that my pulse was flitting. Papa cried and said—'O, doctor dear—save, do save—our precious Bertha.' But I felt—that my life—was going—with great speediness. Every breath seemed—weaker and shorter. When I heard them—whispering—a letter—I was thinking—most sadly was I—thinking—most forlornly—was I feeling—that I had lost—my Leon—caring not to live—in the world—without him. Hopeless and fearless—sinking, dying—methought—the letter—might possibly be—from dear Leon. Then, at this thought—was my soul—in great commotion. When I found it—was from Leon surely—then was my heart—all on fire—fire that set—the wheels in motion—set the wheels of life—in tripping motion. Now my own—my delightful Leon—you are mine—and mine for ever. Every moment—you are with me. Papa says that—I must not hurry. He says that I am too young—and girlish yet. Says that I must—not write to Leon—but must wait—these two years—at least. O, this seems cruel—dearest Leon, but—never mind—I shall surely—send you this. And then remember—your Bertha will be—faithful till death. Now my precious Leon—adieu. Keep me—for ever in your heart.

"Yours forever,

"BERTHA BOWER."

"Now that will do, my darling nurse," said Bertha.

"Put up the portfolio and lay it in the bureau, there's a good dear girl — and to-morrow I shall write it all over and let you carry it to the post-office — perhaps to-day." It was sent that very afternoon.

Health and strength and joy now returning, Bertha's home was again gladsome and bright. Rattling and laughing, warbling and playing, brought she sunshine most delightful to the house. So swiftly did the days and nights fly along that they seemed, when past, as mere winks and flashes.

CHAPTER IV.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND FIDELITY.

EDWARD FORESTER was the son of George Forester, the farmer. George Forester was the rival of Rosco Bower — his chief rival in all Charming Valley. Proud and wealthy was this George Forester, and Ned was his son. Ned was a wild, dashing young man — very gay, reckless and wild, and he greatly fancied Bertha Bower. He was several years her senior — shrewd, fascinating and cultured, not over modest, not over scrupulous, not even too strictly conscientious. Notwithstanding, he seemed to fancy the innocent and pure-minded Bertha Bower.

Bertha, full of spirit and childlike, fond of amusement and pleasure, unsuspecting and artless, treated him as an elder brother. Week after week, his kindly attentions, his pleasing stories, friendly manners, generous presents, and his noble bearing, wrought somewhat upon Bertha's confiding nature. Still, the imperial realm of Leon he had never, in the least, invaded. Around the divine sanctum of her heart, had she firmly set the barriers. When the time had at length ripened, quite to his own surprise, and against his first intention, Ned's own heart had become entangled. To tell the truth, he had become completely captivated.

After Bertha's recovery, Edward's calls were frequent. His conversations were generally amusing or entertaining, sometimes quite instructive; then again erratic and full of conceit, but always seasoned with the tenderest consideration towards Bertha. At length —it was about the holiday season—he sought and attempted, with the most unfaltering confidence, to make her his captive; presuming to take full possession of her heart, and to reign there without a rival. But to his great surprise he found no vacancy in that establishment—no cleft nor corner, for Ned Forester to enter and erect his throne.

Edward. How delightfully you have recovered your health, Miss Bertha, from that terrible illness. Permit me to say there was, throughout all the Valley, much anxiety about you, and your rapid and remarkable convalescence is now a subject of very general congratulation.

Bertha. Yes, Edward, it was very wonderful, and we are all so thankful and delighted about it. I am so well now and so happy. Life really seems sweeter to me than ever before.

Edward. How did you enjoy your school life in Philadelphia?

Bertha. O, very much indeed. Every thing there was delightful. All I lacked was my beautiful home and my dear friends. That, of course, was unavoidable. Every school girl has to suffer that kind of privation, and they say it is necessary for the proper

development of character. I expect to return to Philadelphia, if papa will consent. And really I am not sorry, for I do love my studies so much, and my teachers and classmates also.

Edward. I should judge, Miss Bertha, from the books I find upon your table, that you have a taste for reading. Here I notice a volume of Shakspeare, and here another of Dickens, and both with marginal marks and notations in pencil. Are these your favorite authors? Can you endure the labor of deciphering the abstruse language of Shakspeare, and the complex word painting of Dickens?

Bertha. I have been studying these authors for the past two years, and I esteem them above all price. Yet, of course, I am only a novice.

Edward. What is your estimate of these authors, and which do you regard as the more deserving of immortality?

Bertha. My estimation of them can be of very little consequence to others, and especially to a gentleman of liberal culture. But your question is a fair one, and I will venture to submit, in answer — for what it is worth — a little paper which I scribbled at school, on this very question. Right here it is, in this portfolio.

(Reading.) Shakspeare and Dickens I regard as the two brightest lights of English literature, so far as I have gone. At the distance of several centuries, Shakspeare still shines as a star of the first magnitude, and Dickens appears to me to

belong to the same class of stars; but his true position upon Olympus will have to be determined by posterity. That his services to humanity were quite as valuable as Shakspeare's, I cannot, for a moment, doubt. In abstract power of intellect, in clairvoyance of human nature, in poetical sublimity, and in the calm and thorough mastery of all subjects of thought within the whole range of literature, the verdict must doubtless be awarded to the peerless "Bard of Avon." But the rare and superb Dickens should not be disparaged even by comparison with Shakspeare. When such vast powers as his are consecrated to the best of all uses, and so industriously and so persistently employed in the holiest of all causes, up to his very latest breath, the memory of him who wielded those powers should be held as sacred. His name should be pronounced with reverence, and with bated breath. The poor especially, throughout the world, should render him immortal honors; for his alms were far better than gold. Never before, since the ministry of the great Master himself, have such terrible and telling blows been dealt upon the minions of unhallowed wealth, and such grand and loving service been rendered for the oppressed and down-trodden, as by the powerful and charming Dickens. A heart that overflows with love and charity towards all men, and especially the poor and friendless, is by no means a strange phenomenon. We find such in almost every Christian community. Neither are great and illustrious powers of mind of prodigiously rare occurrence in the world. But extremely seldom is it given to one man to possess both these qualities in a preëminent degree — in such a degree as to strike the whole civilized world with amazement and admiration. Yet such a man was Charles Dickens.

Edward, I trust you will pardon such enthusiasm in a mere child. You know that we school girls are addicted to such absurd things.

Edward. Miss Bertha, allow me to say, that I regard this criticism of yours, so eloquently written, as very sensible and sound; and so far from standing in need of any vindication or apology, it would do great credit to its author, at mature age, and with a finished education. It must have given you a good position at school. I have been through with all such experiences and exercises myself, and I understand them well. You must know I am a graduate of college — that is to say — should have been graduated had it not been for a trifling misapprehension. However, I am glad it is over. There is rather too much of confinement and labor in acquiring a thorough education, for one of my temperament.

Bertha. But Edward, I have been taught that discipline, such as we experience at schools, is a necessity for young people, in order that they may be properly equipped for the battle of life.

Edward. It may be for some, but for my part, I dont like it. I prefer to have my liberty.

Bertha. But liberty, with the advantages of a well-disciplined mind, is far more valuable than with ignorance and poverty of intellect. Sometimes, in life, we must meet with privations, and sufferings of various kinds; sometimes, also, we are called upon to perform difficult tasks, and to discharge important duties; and

if we are properly disciplined while young, are we not stronger and better qualified to bear and to accomplish these things?

Edward. No doubt. But my plan is to keep away from privations and sufferings, and so to avoid both the disease and the medicine. I have no taste for such things; and as to difficult tasks and burdensome duties, if I cannot shirk or escape them, I shall get through them somehow. But now, my dear Bertha, I have a secret in my heart that I am impatient to disclose; not with regard to these great authors whom you have just now so cleverly reviewed, but touching a subject of far more interest to me. Perhaps, with your keen perception, or some subtle magnetic influence, or some female gift or other, you may have discovered this secret already. I wish you to know how sincerely, how passionately I love you — how I adore you in my very heart and soul. All I have I would gladly lay at your feet, only to enjoy your love in return.

"Edward, dear Edward," said Bertha, while she could not possibly keep back the tears, "surely you have my friendship. I esteem you as a dear brother, but my heart belongs to Leon Gaylord. Leon now lives in Cincinnati. Once he and I were little pla[y]mates. We grew up together side by side. [D]day, through the glorious summers, we [w]fields and played together. Hand a[n]river we played and picked berri[es] flowers; or sat beneath the sha[de]

stories, or listening to the birds and squirrels, or mocking bobolinks and blue-jays; throwing pebbles into the water; watching the clouds, the sunsets and the rainbows, and building castles in the future. Then were our hearts knit together; and we always loved each other. Dear Edward, now don't be angry. You are as a favorite brother to me. Will you not love me as a sister? Papa says that when I reach eighteen, I can write again to Leon. So Edward, you see the reason — the plain and simple reason — why I cannot possibly give you more than a sister's love and friendship."

While Bertha was thus speaking, her tones seemed to change, in Edward's ears, from chiming melody to the most painful dissonance. And when she was silent again, disappointment, sad and dreary, fell upon his spirits, with leaden weight. More intense and more uncompromising was his love for Bertha Bower; just as fruit is more fair and luscious when it hangs beyond our reach. Deep and cruel was his hatred towards his rival, Leon Gaylord; just as the bar is most obnoxious which obstructs our favorite plans and purposes. Instantly his heart became evil. Dark and desperate grew his intentions — bitter, determined and desperate. He spake to Bertha. In kindly and specious language falsely, thus he spake:

"Bertha, if it must be so — if I cannot claim more, I will accept you as a friend, as a sister. I will insist upon no greater

favor, no higher privilege than to be your brother. Grant me only your smiling presence; let me but hear the music of your voice; take your hand and walk by your side; share your kindness and confidence; then as a brother will I serve you, as a knightly brother, faithful and true. You will not return to Philadelphia, at present, Miss Bertha?"

Bertha. O no, dear Edward, not under several weeks — perhaps months — perhaps not at all.

Edward. Well, sister Bertha, adieu. I trust I shall be permitted to see you frequently, during your vacation.

Bertha. Most certainly, Edward, and always with a cordial welcome.

As Edward took his departure, Mrs. Bower entered the room; and Bertha, under excitement, told her about Edward's call. "Dear mamma," said she, "don't you know that Edward Forester has been here! He had just left as you came in; and he has embarrassed me very much indeed."

Mrs. B. In what way, Bertha, has he embarrassed you?

Bertha. Why, would you believe it, mamma, he has been making love to me. But, you know, dear mamma, I could only tell him, no. He is a great gentleman, to be sure. And of course I esteem him very highly. But mamma, I must tell you the truth. Leon Gaylord is the only one that ever I can love. Besides all that, you know that I must get my education now. And I

am altogether too young for such things. For you know papa says I am.

Mrs. B. Certainly, Bertha dear, you are quite too young. But your father thinks every thing of Edward Forester. He expects to be so very wealthy. Your father, I am sure, would be more than willing to have you give him the preference. But for myself, I prefer to leave the matter to your own choice. Leon Gaylord is truly a splendid and promising boy. But then, Bertha dear, my advice is to wait until your education is finished before thinking upon this subject at all.

Bertha. Mamma, I shall keep it out of my mind as much as possible. But you know I cannot help my thoughts. And all the world cannot make me change my mind towards Leon. I told Edward I should treat him as a brother, and it was all that I ever could do. And he said he was entirely satisfied with that. But then, somehow, I'm afraid that he was not. He is a gentleman of great talents I know. Sometimes he seems rather too deep and with too many under currents of thought. But then almost any other girl would fall in love with him — I should think.

* * * * * *

Bertha was now rare and sparkling; sweetly modest and unconscious of her own loveliness. Every day her form was unfolding. Every day her mind was developing. Every line of her form was grace and proportion, and every feature was beauty. Graceful was her every step and motion. All her words were

wit and music. All her utterances were melodious with kindness. Fragrant and lovely was her presence —fragrant as a thousand flowers. Something useful or pleasing, something beautiful or beneficent, she strove daily to accomplish. Works of utility or genius, works of charity or kindness, for the poor or the suffering, for the elders or for the children, kept her feet or her fingers busy. Sometimes walking, sometimes riding, her realm extended many miles around. Many miles around was she an empress—loving empress of the children.

CHAPTER V.

A THUNDERBOLT.

LEON GAYLORD was happy now. Bertha's letter had given him constant pleasure, had relieved his mind of all anxiety, and had opened to his ardent imagination a prospective paradise.

He had found many friends in Cincinnati, as well as an excellent situation. Faithful in his various duties, efficient, prompt and ingenuous, with a remarkably quick and comprehensive mind, with notably impressive manners, and fine presence, he commanded attention at sight, and respect, and even admiration, upon acquaintance; living with his mother in a manner frugal and most fitting.

General Proctor found him precisely the kind of help that he needed in the Bank. Leon found in him not only a friend, who furnished him employment and the means of living and supporting his mother, but found him also a friend of a still higher order. Leon was in the bank attending to his duties and studying the business, both early and late. The President soon observed this habit in him, as well as several traits of character, equally valuable. So in a very short time after he had entered the bank, its head had given his confidence to Leon, and made him his right hand man. The business was large and complicated.

A circumstance occurred one day which was well calculated to establish Leon Gaylord firmly in his position, or rather, to secure him a better one.

The firm of H. C. Smith & Co., reputed wealthy, with a business in dry goods supposed to be very large, old patrons of the Proctor Bank, brought in for deposit, regularly endorsed by the firm, several business notes of considerable amount. This was nothing unusual for that large house. The notes were passed to its credit, by Gen. Proctor's direction, without receiving any special attention. The notes footed up, all together, nine thousand seven hundred dollars. In all, there were five notes. The largest two amounted to five thousand dollars. One of these was dated Circleville, Nov. 15th, and signed, D. C. Curtis & Co.; and the other was dated Xenia, Dec. 1st, and signed, Eliot & Brooks.

Leon's position at this time was that of assistant book-keeper. His eye had caught a glimpse of the notes, as the President and first book-keeper were looking them over. Something or other — Leon knew not what — told him there was something wrong about the notes. So, immediately after they were all filed and put away, Leon went quietly and took them out of their packages, unfolded them, and found that the two largest notes were written, in full. That was nothing strange. But he also found, that though written in different hands and with different inks, they had been written upon one and the same sheet of paper, and torn apart — for the torn edges fitted each other exactly.

Of this fact he promptly notified the President, who was thunderstruck. Upon examination he found, as he had expected, that Leon was right. The more he thought upon the matter the more he was convinced that the notes were fictitious. In half an hour after they had been brought into the bank, Messrs. H. C. Smith & Co. received a line from the President, politely requesting one of the firm to come over to the bank without delay. The principal of the firm himself, returned with the messenger. The two notes were spread out before him, with their torn edges in juxtaposition. The President did not open his lips. Neither did Smith. But H. C. Smith turned very pale. "Give me up all the notes and charge them back to us," were the only words spoken while he was in the bank. But he took the notes away.

In a few days the firm of H. C. Smith & Co. exploded. H. C. Smith, who, in fact, constituted all there was of the firm, had sold out his stock and had left the State. Three other banks found, in their vaults, paper from the bankrupt house, amounting in all to twenty-nine thousand dollars; much of it fictitious, and all of it worthless.

Thus it was plainly to be seen that Leon Gaylord had saved the Proctor Bank a considerable sum of money.

Leon's career in this bank, for about two years,—in fact, during his stay in Cincinnati, was highly successful; till, at length, many important trusts of that institution were confided to him. The President had

it in serious contemplation to offer him the cashier's desk. This, no doubt, he would have done at an early day, had Leon remained in the city.

Life is never a bed of thornless roses. Nor is it best, for the growth of character, that it should be. Pleasure, happiness and ease are excellent ingredients for warp, in the fabric of life, but labor, reverses, disappointments and various griefs make up the filling and furnish the colors, or the result will be worthless stuff after all. Probably, however, such a life — that is to say, a life without this kind of filling, has never been woven upon this planet. Trouble and suffering are not only prophylactics and curatives of great value, but in the development of character, their agency is indispensable. Their modes and forms are as various as human nature is complex. They are the best means that God can devise for the perfecting of His work. "Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that He receiveth." In suitable measure, suffering is a tonic for all the virtues, and an antidote of the vices. It subdues pride and emasculates selfishness. It trims away the sharp corners and blemishes of character, and gives it the curve of beauty and the grace of gentleness. It encourages the growth of benevolence and charity. It is the gale that blows away the chaff of vanity, leaving the true grain of inherent worth. It is the fire that burns out the dross and rubbish of sensuality, and leaves the fine gold of the spiritual nature purified and unharmed.

These are some of the true offices of suffering. To whatever use God ordains it, He never employs it as *punishment.* Man, in the savage and uncivilized state, punishes. As he rises in the direction of God, suffering is administered only as a remedy and prophylactic; and retribution becomes obsolete. Like any other remedy, suffering may be misapplied, or inadequately administered; and evil consequences may follow. Even when in damaging excess, it seldom fails to compensate the injury by modifications and improvements of character. And in the balances of God, character is the most telling of all weights. It is the chief object of His vast creation. His omnipotent energies are employed in the production of this beautiful world, of oceans and mountains, of forests and gardens, and of the rolling orbs of heaven, with all their majesty and glory, and of the infinitely varied universe of organism and life — all this for the evolution and perfecting of character.

Leon very faithfully obeyed the hint in Bertha's letter, not to write to her before she was *eighteen.* Neither, for many months — not in fact since he had received her letter — had he learned anything concerning her — either directly or indirectly. His heart was beginning to ache with impatience; and he began to count the months, the weeks and the days.

Not suspecting there was any objection to their correspondence, except on account of Bertha's age, and perhaps also his own — full of high anticipation of the

approaching blissful day, when at last he should meet his charming Bertha, meet her without let or hindrance, at the dear old home in Charming Valley, Leon was gradually and quietly preparing his outfit, replenishing his wardrobe, saving money for the journey and perchance also for the wedding. So with a heart buoyant and elate, though probably not absolutely clear of every vestige of anxiety — with regard to Bertha's health, or some such thing as that — Leon pursued his daily labors.

* * * * * *

Time went on with steady motion — every morning and every evening bringing Leon nearer to Charming Valley and to Bertha Bower. Not a single doubt concerning Bertha, found a lodgment in his bosom. Not a thought of adverse chances, of evil fortunes or of enemies, marred his dreams, asleep or awake. Still was his head dreaming, dreaming; still was his heart feasting, feasting, both on the past and the future. On the past, when Bertha and he had neither care nor interruption; when, could they only have known it, they were as happy as the birds of the air; in the schoolhouse or in the fields — in the grove down by the river-side — in the orchard or in the garden — anywhere if only together. On the future — O the glorious future — the golden, radiant future — future of the palace gardens — full of curious flowers and wonderful birds — future of the sparkling fountains, where the fairies dance and play by moonlight — future of the glittering rainbows, made of the wings of angels.

Nobly had the youth developed; both in form and stature; both in face and feature; both in brain and muscle. Stamped with kindness and manliness, he was cheerful of heart and ready of wit. Blind to danger and deaf to fear, his heart was brave, daring and hopeful. Ingenuous and unsuspecting, he was friendly, confiding and generous.

Time, as usual, went clipping along, stepping, ever stepping; jostling all the men, women and children; jostling all the universe of things and atoms; tireless his steps, on he went, jostling the old and young; shuffling and displacing — constantly displacing — men and things and atoms; setting up some and others overturning; wronging some and others righting; some crushing and others crowning; blessing some and some cursing; healing one and killing another; on and still on he traveled, never, never resting; making sad and making joyful; ticking, beating; creating and destroying; bringing sunshine and peace, bringing storm and earthquake; wealth and plenty, famine and want.

One morning, after breakfast, Mrs Gaylord and her son, as usual, improved a few moments' leisure in conversation.

Leon. Dear mother, your health has certainly improved since we moved upon the Heights. You are looking younger and happier. We stayed too long in those pent-up quarters on Reed street, and I am just thankful we escaped thence without any sickness. Mother, in two weeks from to-day I am to leave you

for the Valley of Charms. Should I return with Bertha, I propose that this house shall be distinguished as Charming Cottage. No name could be more significant and appropriate. But I cannot tell. Bertha's father and mother may possibly think we are too young to marry; and in that case we shall postpone the wedding another year.

Mrs. Gaylord. That will be right, Leon. You can afford to wait several years, if Bertha or her parents think best; but I trust that you will be settled in your mind, at least, and that you will have no more anxiety.

Leon. Mother dear, now honor bright. If your very heart should speak, would it not say that Bertha Bower is the loveliest girl you ever knew? Don't you honestly think that every body else thinks so?

Mrs. G. (With a broad smile.) Well, my son, I do think she was a lovely girl when we left Charming Valley, but you must not expect that other people will look upon her through your eyes. It might be very unfortunate for you if they did; for in that case you might possibly lose her. She was a bright and beautiful girl, it is true, but her character was not fully developed, and her heart had not been thoroughly tested. Many things are yet in the future, even with regard to Bertha. While I would not depreciate her in your eyes, Leon, I would keep your judgment within the bounds of reason, and have you remember, that being only human, she is most certainly imperfect. However perfect or imperfect she may be, other people will not

look upon her as you do; and for this you may well be thankful.

Leon. Well mother, I only asked you these silly questions for the sake of talking about Bertha. I know what you have been saying is true, and I knew it before. I don't expect she will command the same degree of admiration from others that she does with us. Of one thing I am positively certain, no angel has ever crossed my path, if Bertha is not one.

Mrs. G. I only hope and pray you will never change your mind about her, Leon. At my age people are not as apt to see angels, as at yours.

(The door bell rings, and the postman enters.)

As when Nature is all cheerful, as when skies are radiant and kites are flying, as when birds are warbling and flowers are blooming, suddenly there comes a shaft of lightning, and hurls our fortress all into shivers, knocks our castle all into rubbish, and turns our treasures all into ashes, thus, when the heart of Leon Gaylord was bounding with high hopes and the most effulgent prospects, soon to crystallize in gems of reality, when his soul was expanding with the buds of glowing anticipation, soon to mature and ripen into fruits of delightful experience, (but a fortnight to intervene, when starting for Charming Valley, he would be leaving all the prosy world behind him, with all its vexing cares and unshapely doubts,) lo! there comes a letter for Leon.

"Leon, look! here's a letter for you, postmarked 'Charming Valley.'"

Leon takes the letter in his hand and turns it over. Then he reads the superscription — "Leon Gaylord, Cincinnati, Ohio." Then, for a moment, he ponders silently. Gravely turning to his mother, excitedly, "What," says he, "is the meaning of *this*, dear mother?" I am sure it is not Bertha's penmanship."

"No, my son," said Mrs. Gaylord, examining the letter, it surely is not Bertha's. As I think, it is more like her father's. Leon, I'm afraid of trouble. I'm afraid of evil tidings."

Leon. Pshaw! dear mother, don't believe it. Why not think the tidings favorable? The letter, you see, is a comely one, shapely and clean. Where is your confidence and trust in Heaven?

Mrs. G. Leon, you had better read the letter. It will speak for itself. Remember, I have warned you. Now, nerve yourself for heavy tidings. Last night I was dreaming — but no matter — read it, Leon, read the letter.

Quickly, then, Leon broke the envelope, and rapidly scanned the contents of the letter. Then — what were the visions that passed before him! Then — what darkness overwhelmed him! Read the letter, and then imagine. Here is a copy:

CHARMING VALLEY, September 1, —

MR. LEON GAYLORD: Dear Sir, I write you tidings that I trust will afford you pleasure. You remember our daughter, Bertha — your old schoolmate — Bertha Bower. Well,

last night, she was married — married to a merchant of Philadelphia, and to-morrow they sail for Europe. Thinking that you would feel an interest in Bertha's fortunes on account of your long and early acquaintance with her, I write you. Bertha also, (now Mrs. Cummings) sends kind wishes, both to yourself and your mother.

Yours, ROSCO BOWER.

P.S. Bertha says, "Do enclose him just a little piece of fruit cake." This you will please find within the envelope.

R. B.

Suddenly, as flashes the lightning, was the world changed to Leon's vision. Shocking as the thunder crash that follows, was the blow upon his spirit. Speechless he sat, while his mother was sobbing in sympathetic anguish. For a long time he seemed but semi-conscious, lost in reverie, and indifferent to every thing. At last, when reaction followed, his mental suffering was dreadful indeed.

Now the royal office of Mother found its true sphere of service. Like a tender and skillful surgeon, she brought into requisition all her genius and tact, for the relief of his suffering; appealing to his self-respect, to his pride and independence; clearly proving to his judgment Bertha's weakness and fickleness; and with her own wise and prudent counsels, bracing up his wrecked and broken spirit; with the soothing balm of kindness, healing his bruised affections; with new themes of thought, and new schemes of action, diverting his mind and stimulating new ambitions.

CHAPTER VI.

DIAMONDS AND THINGS.

THERE was no spare room in Bertha's heart for Ned Forester. She had always told him plainly that she could love no one but Leon Gaylord. But Ned had plenty of self-confidence, and many resources. Then, too, Rosco Bower was in his favor. Rosco, as the reader knows, was a right resolute man; indomitably firm of purpose and persistent. He had meant from the very first, not to be defeated in his plan. Without the least shadow of contingency, without any ambiguity, or doubt, he had meant that the bar should be strong and effectual — the bar of separation between his daughter, the lovely Bertha, and the poor widow's son, Leon Gaylord.

Forester was a young man after Rosco's own heart. It may be a question for the reader to consider hereafter, whether Rosco, when he had ascertained Bertha's abiding and unconquerable love for Leon, did or did not make certain suggestions, hints or innuendoes to Ned Forester, which, if such a thing could have been proven, or even were it generally believed — nay, or even generally *suspected*, would have consigned his name to infamy. We shall endeavor to leave the reader unbiased in his judgment upon this question,

except so far as a full and fair statement of the facts in the case may have the effect to bias him.

Leaving that question for the reader's future consideration, Rosco could never say enough in Edward's praise, when Bertha was present. He was such a promising, such a talented, such a magnificent fellow—reminding him of Napoleon the Great, of Lord Chesterfield, and other famous persons. He lost no opportunity, in every quiet way, to exalt the conceited young man in Bertha's estimation. Nor did he neglect, upon every convenient occasion, to disparage and underrate Leon Gaylord, and make light of all his virtues. "Such a boy as he would never get ahead in the world. He was too free-hearted. He had no policy — no secretiveness about him. He would never rise above a mere clerk or laborer. He was too fond of books, for a business man." These words were intended only for Bertha's ear. Rosco knew, as well as others, that Leon was a splendid boy. But the god that Rosco worshipped was one fashioned of gold and silver.

Forester also was very persevering. While the substratum of genuine manhood in his moral structure was exceptionally thin, as a compensation for this, he possessed a good quantity of cunning, a commanding personal appearance, a smooth and fluent address, a quick and pleasing wit, a faultless wardrobe, and a popular style generally. By these qualities and his artful use of them, together with his deep, unchanging

purpose to secure Bertha's hand, he succeeded in keeping up his friendly relations with her. Her reverence for her father, was also a great assistance to him in that respect. This filial sense was very intense in her. There was probably only one thing in all the world that was stronger in her breast than this principle — and that was her love for Leon. These relations of friendship gave Forester great advantages for prosecuting his love schemes. With his adroitness in wielding them, the chances would seem to have been largely in his favor. But the truth was quite otherwise. With all these advantages, he was no match for Leon Gaylord, even in his silence, his absence and his poverty.

* * * * * *

Silver and gold, pure and glistening, are nothing but dross and the merest rubbish; diamonds, clear as mountain dew-drops, are just as worthless; pearl and opal are as contemptible as the meanest pebbles; emerald, beryl or amethyst, or whatsoever stone is called precious, is as poor and cheap as the veriest toy — poor and cheap, when brought in contrast with pure love — supreme, virgin love — not such an article as may be purchased with these baubles, but the divine effusion of the heart — but the exhalation of the pure soul — youthful passion, first-born and genuine.

During Bertha's vacation, she lost no time; but every day was spent in some unselfish enterprise or other. Her whole study was to make other people happy, or to

make them better. Somehow, whatever she enlisted in she found plenty of assistance. The children, especially, were always ready, heart and hand, to join her, no matter what she proposed. She had a rare faculty for entertaining children; telling them stories, contriving amusements, and all the while developing their moral traits and committing them to some good resolution or some good cause.

One day she said to her mother: "I have resolved to do something for the children of Charming Valley, and get them in the way of doing something for themselves, after I am gone. Mamma, what do you think it ought to be? Well, I am going to establish a children's Temperance Society here. I have had the notices all distributed, and to-morrow we must go for the purpose of organizing. If anybody wants to witness a beautiful scene, he or she can come to the old red school-house, down at the Elbow, to-morrow forenoon."

Mrs. Bower. Well, Bertha, that is certainly a good cause, and I hope you will be successful in it. But what do you think it will amount to? The children are all temperate enough now, in regard to drinking. (This she said for the purpose of drawing Bertha out. At least, we think so.)

Bertha. Yes, mamma, but were not all the drunkards once children? Now suppose they had all signed the pledge then, and been organized in societies, don't you believe that some of them would have been saved?

They say it is not a very easy job to reform drunkards; and I have heard that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I have heard that from your own dear lips. Now, what does it mean? There are sixteen ounces in a pound. According to that saying, it is sixteen times easier to *prevent* a drunkard than to *cure* one. That is to say, you can prevent sixteen drunkards easier than you can reform one. It is an easy matter to straighten a little twig, when it is crooked, and it is easy to keep it straight afterwards; but a full-grown tree, when once crooked, can never, or hardly ever, be straightened. At any rate, while I am not strong enough to make any impression on a big tree, I can put a great many little twigs in the way of growing straight. We have forty names on the pledge already, and I expect as many more to-morrow. I believe, mamma, that this is the beginning of a good work. I believe, too, that if great temperance men and women would spend more time in organizing children in societies and securing their pledges, and seeing that the organizations are kept in a healthy and flourishing condition, there would be fewer drunkards, by ever so many.

Mrs. B. Bertha dear, I think your reasoning is good; and what is still better, I think your heart is in the right place. God speed your good work. Older persons might well follow your example. Bertha darling, be sure to dress warm and take care of your health.

* * * * * *

Edward Forester had been absent from the Valley for several days. When he returned, he called upon Bertha, very promptly; and in the most friendly manner saluted her:

"Well, sister Bertha, how splendid you are looking to-day! so bright and healthful and happy."

Bertha. Yes, Edward, I am feeling perfectly well to-day. I feel well every day. I have just now been telling mamma all about my new enterprise.

Forester. What enterprise have you on hand now, sister Bertha?

Bertha. We are organizing a children's temperance society. To-morrow forenoon, you must come down to the school-house and see us.

Forester. That is a very queer enterprise indeed. Of what advantage can it be to you?

Bertha. It can afford me great pleasure. I desire no greater advantage than to know that some may be saved from intemperance by it.

Forester seemed to take little interest in Bertha's enterprise. He had something else in his mind. He had brought home a present for her — a rich and beautiful one. It was a diamond solitaire — a very brilliant stone — with a costly setting of opals. It was a large, splendid first-water diamond — startling and overpowering — just the shaft for the achievement of female conquest. At all events, that was his opinion. He had backed his opinion with a round sum of money.

In a graceful, careless manner, he tossed the gem before her upon the table.

"Bertha," he said, "take this from your brother, as a token of his brotherly friendship — as an evidence of his devoted affection."

Bertha, taking the jewel in her hand for a moment and inspecting it with much apparent admiration, turned to Forester with a tearful smile, and replied:

"I do not want it, Edward. I cannot take it; for it cannot be rightfully mine. Never, never can I wear it. You have wronged and grieved me."

"Dear Bertha," he said, "are you not my dear sister? Can it be that I have overstepped the limits of a true, devoted brother?"

Bertha. Yes; it is not a brother's privilege to grieve or offend his sister. Take it back. I shall not wear it — never — without Leon's sanction. Would you have presumed, or even *dared* to make such a presentation as this to me, in Leon's presence? In a few days I shall see him — my brave and noble Leon. Then I shall tell him all about this, and follow *his* counsel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WORST OF ALL.

THE twentieth of September! What a morning was that in Charming Valley! It was a dark day for Bertha Bower. Dark was the morning, and terrible the night. It was a day of mourning and of doom. It was a night of sorrow, of wailing, and of thick darkness!

In the forest the birds were piping their usual melodies, and in the field and vineyard all was animation and life. The clouds chased one another across the azure sea overhead, like ships with their sails all spread to the breeze, on the ocean below. The lowing of cattle, the ringing voice of the farm laborer, the barking of dogs, the screaming of poultry, the clatter of machinery in the distance, and the hum of bees—with all the varieties of swell and cadence, of harmony and discord — gave to the hearing ear the sweetest of music. In the garden all was beauty, fragrance and delight, and in the house all was loveliness and gayety, and cheerfulness and song and rattling merriment.

Here comes a letter for Rosco Bower. It is a letter from Cincinnati, Ohio. Rosco is evidently puzzled. Without saying a word, he studies and speculates upon it from an exterior standpoint. At length, he very

deliberately opens and reads it. Without taking his eyes from the paper he is heard to groan. He is distinctly seen to shudder, as if almost in a spasm. The letter drops from his hand. His features become pallid, and he sinks down upon the sofa, without speaking a word.

Bertha and her mother see him at the critical moment — see the terrible struggle and commotion — see the sudden blanching of his face, and hear him groaning. Flying instantly to where he lay, with the perspiration starting from his brow:

"Husband!" "Father!" they exclaim, "do tell us — tell us quickly — where is your pain? what *is* the matter?"

It was some time before he was able to speak. But at length, still trembling and pale, he managed to sit up and answer them.

"O Bertha, my dear daughter," said he, "the tidings from Cincinnati are very sad and shocking. It is for your sake, my child, that I am so much alarmed and distressed. Now, my precious Bertha, be strong, and arm your heart with all the courage and firmness you can possibly command, while I read to you the sorrowful letter:

CINCINNATI, September 15, ——.

ROSCO BOWER, ESQ.: Dear Sir, I write you this hasty letter for my poor stricken neighbor, Mrs. Gaylord. She has just lost her only son — her splendid boy, Leon. He was her only stay and comfort — all she had in the world. He was

truly a young man she had a good right to be proud of. Last Wednesday he died of fever, after only a week's illness. Yesterday the poor boy was buried. In her sad and terrible bereavement, the mother has requested me to write you. Within a day or two she intends to go away from Cincinnati, out to her cousins in Missouri, to spend the fall and winter. Perhaps she will make her future home there, if it should be agreeable with her cousin. Leon was often speaking of Bertha Bower. He was intending to go East in the course of a few days to see her. He did not exactly know but he should bring her home with him, as his bride. He has been snatched away by a mysterious providence. I shall accompany Mrs. Gaylord to her cousin's, for she is a very dear friend of mine. This, with sadness, SUSAN JONES.

When Bertha had heard this letter, she stared as if her mind was bewildered and confused. Before the reading was finished, Mrs. Bower had taken Bertha in her arms, with a mother's agonizing sympathy.

All now was tumult. Bertha laughed and cried, all at once, and talked wildly and incoherently:

"My dear mamma, this is a cruel letter. Leon never wrote this letter. It was some very cruel person. Dear mother, shall we start now? Are they all ready?" (She flies around, and seems in a hurry to go away.) "Mother, dear, I have made up my mind what dress I shall wear. But I must keep it a profound secret till the wedding."

Mrs. Bower. My dear child, try now and be a brave girl. God wanted Leon, and we must submit, like good children to God's will.

Bertha. Don't you think that God wants Bertha, too? Where's my hat, mother? I must go now. I must go immediately, for I think God wants me, also. You must wait, and so must dear papa. Leon! Leon! (Calling loudly.) Come now, I am waiting. Mamma, get my hat, for I must not be detained.

Now they perceived that her brain was really disordered and that her reason was shaken. Now, again, Bertha fell into a terrible fever, and for many days, there seemed to be scarcely any ground of hope. Dr. Goodsoul compared the fever to a resistless tornado, that overbears all opposition. "Medicine," he said, "seems as nothing but dry leaves before it."

Rosco Bower had never before been so sadly unmanned. In fact he lost his balance, so completely, as to require the attendance of his neighbors, night and day. There were many different opinions as to the cause of such inordinate suffering on his part. We shall not attempt to bias the reader's mind by stating what these opinions were, or by offering any of our own.

Gloomy were the indications and melancholy the prospects with regard to Bertha. Never was she quite conscious, but constantly rambling and raving in her mind — raving of her wedding dress and of Leon's wonderful beauty — then of Leon's cruel misfortunes — then deploring her own sad fate — till her heart seemed bursting with grief. Still there was no ground of encouragement — no symptom of improvement.

Through all this storm of excitement and terror, Mrs. Bower was calm and self-commanding; though she idolized Bertha and would willingly have died to save her. It was either by God's goodness, or her own consciousness of having done no wrong, herself, or by her natural poise and evenness of temper, that she maintained a degree of equanimity and self-possession throughout this great trial, which in the commander of an army, would be of infinite value.

What can we say of Edward Forester? The shock upon him, caused by Bertha's appalling illness, also seemed dreadful. Terror-stricken and overwhelmed, scarcely less forlorn than Bertha, listless, nerveless and taciturn, changed in countenance and voice, he seemed frightened as by a spectre. He seemed paralyzed and shattered in his mind. His vigor seemed all exhausted, his spirit-force extinguished. Dull, vacant, and nearly speechless, these questions only asked he: "How is Bertha? How is Bertha? How is Bertha? Is she dead? Is Bertha dying?"

Thus for days and days, was Charming Valley filled with fear, terror and despair. Pleasure and business were suspended. Bertha Bower was loved by every one, and just worshipped by the children. Many were weeping, while all were anxiously waiting, watching, praying and hoping for her restoration.

There was still another element in the great lamentation. The tidings of Leon Gaylord's death were enough, had there been no other cause of grief, to

have produced a general depression and gloom. Leon had been beloved by all the youth of the Valley, for his kindness and generosity, for his readiness and fertility of invention, for his uniform cheerfulness and good nature, and for his promptness and dexterity in all youthful sports. Then he had also been marked as a favorite by all the elder people, for his brightness of intellect, for his amiability and good manners, and for his skillful and manly leadership, to which he had been elected, by the unanimous consent of the boys.

Thus it is, that when a boy or girl of remarkable promise is taken off by death, there is grief and a sense of loss, almost as that of some old and useful citizen. One great and good man or woman will do more for the advancement of a generation and the world, than a hundred ordinary-minded persons. And the great and good, and those who promise to be great and good, are such rare phenomena upon earth, and so much needed withal, that when they die it is something as if some lovely and beautiful star had left the heavens, never to rise again. When a hundred stars of only faint lustre and ordinary size sink below the horizon, nobody feels the loss as of much consequence, but when a planet of the first magnitude goes down — a planet of some peculiar beauty, or brilliancy — all the eyes that are turned towards the heavens, at the time, are saddened and grieved. When those who are distinguished for goodness or great promise go down in death, a sense of bereavement seems to pervade the atmosphere.

Now, in the deep extreme of anguish, they called in the sainted pastor. He, with a kind and sympathetic heart, with a spirit full of love and tenderness, prayed with devout and tearful supplication, to the throne of merciful Heaven. With the fervent unction of Christian faith he prayed:

"O most gracious Father in heaven, bend down upon us thy pitying eye. Magnify Thy loving kindness in this trying and painful visitation — in this sad, supreme affliction. If consistent with Thy infinite goodness, lift from us this overshadowing sorrow. Drive away this midnight darkness. Give us all needful patience and submission. In this hour of crushing bereavement, send us, we pray Thee, Thy spiritual consolations. Give us grace and strength to suffer all that Thy infinite goodness hath prescribed. Heavenly Father, most gracious and kind, spare to us, O spare Thy loving handmaid. Save, O save her from this great peril."

After many days, having by the mercy of God, survived, Bertha's fever subsided and her strength gradually returned; till at length she was restored to bodily health and vigor. Though her cheeks were still pale, her eyes sparkled with new light and lustre. Her brain was still unsettled and chaotic. Her mind was still unbalanced and distracted. More sad and painful to her friends, than death itself, was the condition in which the fever had left her. The links of the ethereal chain which connects mind with matter, which constitutes the medium between the soul and its earthly

tenement, though not broken asunder, were wrested and wrenched, perhaps irremediably impaired.

It seemed as if Leon was constantly in her presence. He seemed to stand, and walk, and sit beside her. In her moods she seemed to look upon him as with her natural eyes; to talk with him and to play and ramble with him. For hours together she would walk alone, as if by his side — through the fields or down by the river; chatting and laughing and picking bouquets and berries. At times she would sit in the shade of the pine-trees, repeating verses or humming tunes, in the most plaintive and pitiful voice; calling to the squirrels and birds; asking questions herself, or seemingly listening to Leon and answering his questions; then again, telling him childish stories. Then, ofttimes, in the most piteous accents and with tears in rainy torrents, would she weep and wail for Leon as if her very heart were breaking. Thus would she lament and complain:

"They have taken my Leon away where I shall never see him again. He never would have left me had I not grieved him so. I did grieve him cruelly, and he went away across the frightful mountains. Leon, love, your Bertha did not know it — your poor Bertha did not know that she grieved you. Do the angels love you? — do the dear angels love my lovely Leon? Send the angels to Bertha. She will teach them to love you, as they ought. Bertha loves you far better than the angels do. I must go now — I

must go beyond the mountains. For I must find him — I must surely find him. Yea — I told them all that he was coming. I told them the day and the hour that I should see my beloved. But in the hard coffin they have laid him, and in the dark damp grave. In the grave they have laid the treasure of my heart — the life of my life. I saw him last night — he was here. His face shone like the day, for brightness, and his wings were as white as the fleecy snow drift. Dearest Leon, did I grieve you so when they drove you off. How cheerfully, my darling, how pleasantly would I die — how proudly would I yield my breath to find you! I could die as well as Leon. Sweetly could I die, but not so bravely as he. If tears were the purest heart's blood, O how gladly would I weep, how joyfully weep for my true love — my betrothed — my Leon!" Yea, I would wring out the tears till my heart were silent!

Then again, in the most plaintive and heart-touching tones, she would sit down at eventide and sing — while the robins were warbling in the trees over her head:

Come Leon, Oh come ; I am waiting for thee,
In the fields, by the river, and here in the wildwood.
The birds too are singing and waiting with me ;
With the same notes they sang in the days of our childhood.

Go call him, sweet bird ; tell him Bertha is here,
And is waiting for Leon alone, in the wildwood ;
Unmindful of comfort, unconscious of fear ;
On the ground we so loved in the days of our childhood.

The sun has gone down and my Leon is lost,
Amid dangers unknown, in the far distant wildwood :
Or on the dark waves, by the fierce tempest tossed,
Far away from his Bertha, his playmate in childhood.

No more can she rest until Leon is found,
And is rescued from peril, in ocean or wildwood —
Until they shall meet on the dear hallowed ground —
On the play-ground of Leon and Bertha in childhood.

CHAPTER VIII.

IS, WILL BE, OUGHT TO BE.

WHEN the treasures of a palace — all its gold and silver ornaments, and its choice and costly furniture, its luxurious appointments and valuable works of art — by some unaccountable and terrible explosion within its sacred recesses, are all rent and marred, demolished, broken in fragments and utterly despoiled, by the sudden violence of the shock — then also is the palatial structure itself hopelessly split asunder and mixed and scattered, piece-meal, in the common ruin. All, then, seems but one mass of rubbish, one common ruin.

Thus now was Leon's heart all broken in fragments. The love of Bertha had completely filled it; growing with its growth from childhood. When, as by a sudden explosion, her love was shivered and blown into thin air — scattered afar and extinguished forever, as he believed — his heart, together with all the delightful riches it contained, was wrecked and desolate.

For many days Leon languished; never smiling and rarely speaking — vacantly listening to his mother — silently listening, but seldom answering.

She, with untiring patience and perseverance, aided by the lăpse of time judiciously employed new devices

to heal the vital wounds; wrought new combinations to restore the shattered structure; introduced new thoughts and new objects, social pleasures and diversions, pleasant faces and bright, lovable, fascinating young ladies — gentle, fairy-like and captivating.

Leon, of course, was unfit for business, and was obliged, temporarily, to leave the Bank. He left it just long enough for General Proctor to realize the extent of his usefulness in that institution. The General, as the reader has discovered long ere this, was one of Nature's noblemen. Notwithstanding that he was the possessor of great wealth, he was a just man in all his transactions. He was also eminently generous. It seems almost incredible that a banker should be distinguished as *the poor man's friend*, and especially a banker of large wealth. As a general rule, having but few exceptions, such a thing will hardly be claimed for that class of men. General Proctor was pre-eminent, far and wide, as one of those exceptions. He was not ininflated by wealth. He regarded money as a mere circumstance in a man's life — a circumstance carrying duties and responsibilities with it which quite balance all its personal advantages. Neither was his moral vision impaired by wealth. He could discern character with wonderful acumen, through money as thick as a Chinese wall, as well as through rags. In fact he seemed to regard himself as rather the agent or steward than as the owner, in fee simple, of his large estate. He seemed anxious rather to dispose of it wisely and

beneficently than to hug it to his bosom and employ it simply as a propagator of its kind.

Upon Leon's return to the bank, the General having learned the quality and extent of his services, by being deprived of them for a few days, voluntarily advanced his salary fifty per cent. For this favor, as unexpected as it was unsolicited, Leon was extremely grateful. But he then took occasion to inform the General, confidentially, that he had decided to surrender his situation before many months, for the purpose of trying his fortune in California.

The General was considerably touched by this announcement, but, at the time, made no reply. After a few hours he called Leon to his desk. "I have been thinking," said he, "of your proposition. If you have deliberately made up your mind to strike out for California, you will have my approval and encouragement; and I will supply you with whatever means you may lack for the undertaking." But he advised Leon to consider the matter on all sides, and to be in no haste about it.

"Leon," he said, "let me tell you what I think. When I look out upon the future, though naturally hopeful, my heart is saddened at the prospect. Our beloved country has a dark cloud overhanging it, and not very far in the future. We are standing upon the ragged edge of a great and terrific war. Slavery will be abolished, no doubt — but through torrents of blood. Should you remain here you cannot, with your ambi-

tion and love of country, stay out of it. It may be well with you in California — better than to die in battle. I cannot tell the day and the hour, but the time is at hand. Politicians and statesmen may cry 'Peace! peace!' but there will be no peace, until the clouds that have been slowly gathering in the nation's firmament shall have burst in torrents of blood. Since the battle must be fought, why should it be delayed? In what condition it shall leave the country God only knows. While I have no doubt of the main result, and of the fate of slavery, still the burden of debt and the thousand and one moral calamities that will follow stand out in my vision, as a baleful and revolting picture.

"This is not all. Nor is it the worst, I fear, except that it is the nearest. I am no prophet nor prophet's son. But I can see a still darker cloud beyond that of slavery. There are other grave questions to be arbitrated by this country for the world. The next in order will be the property question. And this is the great question of the rising future."

Leon. Why should this be a *casus belli?* It is a historical question of the ages — a question of all civilized nations, ancient and modern. Why, then, should you prophesy war from it, and that in our generation?

General P. I may not live to see it, and God grant that I may not. I am past the meridian of life. You are in its forenoon, and may. This is a new age — an age of progress. Since printing was invented the world has been in a course of preparation. There cannot be

much true progress until manhood shall be recognized as superior to money — that is to say, until fraternity shall triumph over selfishness.

The Declaration of our fathers, *that all men are created equal*, is to be the key-note of the future. This is a new gospel to the world. It is already accepted as a principle; hereafter it will be reduced to practice. The first step will be to cut the bonds of Slavery. This will be done and done very soon. Doubtless it will be done with the sword. The next step may be still more sanguinary. Brother may rise against brother, and father against son; the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. For Selfishness is the beast with a thousand heads and ten thousand horns. Manhood must assert its supremacy over Money, or there can be no general moral advancement in the world. Hitherto money has not only administered the laws of the land — it has enacted them also. All the Governments in the world are brought to the same level, no matter whether monarchies or republics — except that in this Government of ours the leaven of the Declaration is clearly at work; and it may not cease till the whole mass is brought under its influence. Men are just now beginning to be enlightened, to be educated and to reason. The Declaration they know by heart. They are now studying out the meaning of the words. It is as sacred to the masses as the Lord's prayer. And when they have thoroughly ascertained the mean-

ing of the words, there will be a tempest in the moral atmosphere, that will level to the earth the deep-rooted and high-reaching growths of the barbarous and selfish ages of the past, without mercy.

Leon. But other nations have met this question times without number; and have never failed to establish the authority of the current Government.

General P. That is probably true, Leon. But the case was never before as it is now and here. Hitherto the Governments have been held as institutions sacred and entirely separate and independent of the people. They have uniformly been guarded by the most formidable standing armies; which have had far more sympathy with the Governments than with the peoples. But here the people are the Government itself. They control the army, they control the finances. They have all the necessary strength to crush out the despotism of gold; and all that is needed is for the people to find out their strength and to understand their God-given rights. These things they are rapidly learning just now. When this great movement shall be general, earnest and intelligent, it may as well be accepted as the voice of God. The moral state of society, under the rules of the so-called civilized nations, is without any promise of improvement or change. The ages are rolling away and the same evils, the same sufferings, and the same horrors stay by us. The same incubus crushes us down. Poverty, crime, famine, pestilence and war, are just as much at home in the world, and seems as secure

as ever in the past. This is very cruel to the sufferers and very humiliating to any man who is all a man. It takes no prophet to see and to hear. The subterranean forces are in action. The volcanic fires are gleaming. There are omens in the air of an earthquake — something that shall unsettle and shake the foundations of society, reconstruct and reform the systems of injustice and inequality, rescue the world from the domination of Mammon, and shall give to the world new hope, new institutions and a new era. God grant, that if this be the only way to save the world, the time may not be far off. Of the day and the hour knoweth no man, and few believe that they will ever come. Like the rising storm, it is something that no man can help or hinder, at will. Yet brain and muscle are preparing it, though never so unconsciously. Jehovah is directing it. All our prayers and remonstrances will be as the down of thistles before it. The world as it is, would be a failure. All men agree to this. But with the glorious possibility — the sublime destiny — plainly in reserve for it, and now perchance dawning in the horizon, it is a grand and triumphant success, auspicious to man and worthy the conception of a God.

Leon. My dear sir, you charm me with your language, but I almost believe you could make out a sounder argument on the other side of the question, if only your convictions lay upon that side. This I say with all due respect, both for your opinion and especially for the grand and loving soul that lies at

the foundation of it. In the greatness of your heart, dear General, the wish, I suspect, is father to the thought. I have no doubt you would be glad to have the poor and degraded portions of society raised to a level with the rest, at ten-fold — nay, at a hundred-fold — your just proportion of the expense. And if a majority of the most intelligent people were like you, I verily believe there would soon be a happy revolution of this kind — at least in this country. The trouble is that you are now in a very small minority. We are apt to judge the rest of the world by ourselves. However righteous that rule might be, with regard to this question, if we could only step forward a few thousand years, it certainly is a very fallacious rule applied to this generation. There may be wars and commotions, and even revolutions, on account of this property question, but as to any marked reformation upon it, I confess I can see but little encouragement. The true place for the work to begin is in the common *heart*, as well as the common *mind*. The true way for it to begin is to cultivate fraternity and exterminate selfishness. The politician or demagogue can never make it a success. All the blood that shall be shed by force of arms, to overthrow the rich and to exalt the poor, will be a sacrifice to Moloch; and will aid to increase rather than diminish the evil, in just so far as it shall widen the gulf of Uncharitableness.

"Well, well, Gaylord," said the General, "I must

acknowledge you have answered me very ably for one so young — very indeed." Thus the conversation ended.

The General knew nothing of Leon's special reasons for going to California — nothing of his troubles with regard to Bertha Bower, for Leon had been able by great effort, to preserve his usual deportment in the bank, during business hours. At home, however, and with his mother, the restraint was removed; and his grief would often break over, in spite of himself, and assert itself in groans and tears.

Heaven is kind to youthful sufferers. Quickly are young hearts repaired and mended — hearts torn and lacerated by love. Sorely indeed was Leon's heart wounded. It was pierced in all directions and bruised on every side.

Sympathizing neighbors and friends soon observed the situation; and with generous and loving spirits, joined his mother in her efforts to bring him relief; multiplying their kind endeavors, inspiring new designs and hopes to heal and dissipate his sorrows.

Thus, as the time proceeded, Leon was regaining firmness and strength, conceiving new plans and projecting new enterprises; but never forgetting Bertha — never once condemning her course — never blaming or accusing her. Still his manly sense prevailing, this he felt with the most painful clearness — felt that Bertha Bower must thenceforth be discarded and ignored in all the departures of life. In his plans,

his operations and his hopes — in all his schemes of future action, he felt that Bertha had no substantial existence — no being. But he still held her as an angel. In his thoughts and meditations, in his night dreams and his day dreams, never vanished she—never faded — never rose nor fell from the firmament of his mind; ever brightening and beautifying with the increasing distance. As a spirit disembodied — as an essence pure and ethereal — type of virtue and loveliness — type of beauty and innocence — Bertha was his never changing *beau ideal.*

When his heart had at length partially recovered from the shock and the explosion; when, by the kindness of surrounding friends and the vital forces of Nature, its fragments were placed again in their proper order, and relations, and had grown again, reunited and were beginning to heal — then also was the image of Bertha there, in the most central position — in the place of highest honor again. It seemed like an ingrain picture — beautiful and life-like — part and parcel of the fabric itself.

* * * * * *

The Bank was just opened for the day. The clerks were all in their places. Leon was busy at his desk. The President was in his room, looking over the morning papers. Leon, who never failed to know whatever was transpiring in the bank, cast an eye in the direction of the counter; where he caught the glimpse of a face which he very clearly recognized — the face of an

aged individual who was negotiating for a draft on Chicago. Instantly, Leon moved to a little recess in the rear, out of sight from the counter, and beckoned to his side another clerk.

"That," said he, in an undertone, "is the gentleman who stole my money on the steamer. Please go in front of the counter, and at the proper time, request him to step into the President's room with his draft, and there I will confront him. Then fly into the street and summon an officer, and come at once into the President's room."

The clerk faithfully and dextrously followed these directions, politely asking the customer to show his draft to the President of the bank, for his official approval. Without the least hesitation, the old man followed the clerk. Leon, in the mean time, went in through the back way and hastily informed General Proctor of the pregnant situation. When the old thief entered, Leon stood there in readiness to meet him; and the General sat ready to witness whatever might chance to take place.

"Good morning," said Leon, familiarly, "I remember you very well, sir. Take a seat."

The old man, looking at Leon, as if with a vague recollection of him, seemed nervous and disconcerted, but did as he was requested.

"I have been looking for you," said Leon, "for nearly two years. And now the gods have brought you in, I propose to throw you into the hopper again."

The man replied, "You seem to know me, sir, but I have no recollection of you whatever."

"I will try to refresh your memory," said Leon. "Coming down the Ohio river some time ago, on the steamer Pittsburgh, you may recollect that you delivered a green young fellow a very learned lecture on the grinding business of the gods. *That young fellow was myself.* In the mean time, you robbed me of two hundred and fifty dollars in money and other valuables, and then left the steamer, at Maysville. Now, do you recollect me, sir?"

"No, sir," said the old man; "I think I cannot possibly be the individual you refer to, since I am just now on my return from California, where I have been for more than three years past."

"I will try to convince you," said Leon, "that you are mistaken. If you will take the trouble to examine your pocket, you will probably find there a watch and chain which belong to me — a little gold watch, with the letters 'H. G.,' in German text, engraved inside of the case." (Leon had just seen and recognized his chain.)

Upon this the old man seemed to be troubled, and, by a sort of instinctive motion, buttoned up his coat.

"Now," said Leon, "You can return me the money, the watch and the chain, together with interest on the money, and fifty dollars for the use of the watch; or you can step at once into the hopper of the gods." (At this moment the clerk that Leon had sent for an

officer came into the room). "Which will you do first? I have got an officer here to arrest you, if you hesitate a single moment."

The thief was completely broken down. "I surrender at discretion," said he, "for you seem to have me in your power. Here is your watch," (passing it over to Leon, and then counting him out three hundred and forty dollars, which sum Leon claimed as due to him from the robbery,) "and there is your money. Now my good sir, I trust you are satisfied and will let me go."

"What!" said Leon; "let a ravenous wild beast out of his cage, to go forth and prey upon innocent people! I should be a criminal myself, to do that. No, sir; you must go in and be ground again. If you were a young tiger, the case would be different. You might be tamed. But you are an old *wolf*, that I fear can never more be trusted. You must go back into your cage. I pity you in my heart. But if you are to be counted as a man, you must be catalogued with the *insane* — and, shall we believe, the *hopelessly* insane? At least, you belong to the class called *dangerous*. You must therefore be kept under restraint. Though late in the day, there is still a possibility that you may come to your senses, and know before you die how it feels to be an honest man."

Then, calling in the officer, Leon had the old man taken into custody. [In due time the thief was convicted, on the testimony here stated, and sentenced to four years in the Penitentiary of Ohio.]

General Proctor had not found it necessary to utter a single word during the interview just related. When the prisoner was disposed of, the General warmly congratulated Leon upon the aid which Providence had furnished him in securing both the robber and his property; and the adroit manner in which he had handled the rogue.

"Now," said he, "the old man is in prison, and the public is indebted to you for increased immunity on that account. But the criminal himself is a party in the case — a party in the largest interest, and one which we have no right to ignore. His voice is now silent as death. The natural aversion which is generally felt towards that class of persons, often constitutes the bitterest half of their punishment. A sensitive criminal — and many such there are — when he enters the prison door, must feel something as we might imagine a condemned soul to feel upon entering the gates of hell; cut off from the world in which he has hitherto lived — and ushered into a new existence — a world where the lights are all lurid, where the sounds are all doleful, where there is no music, no beauty, no more blooming health, no more innocent pleasure, no more buoyant happiness. Leon, the world in which we live has too little sympathy for the criminal — too little pity — too little help; too much vindictiveness, too much of the savage spirit. Who knows but this old man whom we have incarcerated, might, in earlier life, have been saved by a more humane treatment?"

"A man who carelessly neglects or culpably violates the laws of health, and thus contracts physical disease, and entails upon his offspring and upon society, many depraved constitutions, is cared for by his neighbors, anxiously watched over and tenderly treated until he is restored to health; or, if incurable, his passage to the grave is made smooth as possible. But if a man, carelessly or culpably, disregards or violates the laws of society, as regards property, he is harshly torn away from his family and ruthlessly thrown into prison, or otherwise unfeelingly punished. Now suppose this order of treatment were reversed. Suppose a man who recklessly exposed or abused himself, and thus contracted rheumatism, were tried and whipped so many lashes, or compelled to lie upon the cold ground — or, suppose a man who, by such conduct suffered pleurisy, were condemned to be stuck by pins and needles, or stung by hornets — or, suppose a woman who had thus become the subject of neuralgia were not only disgraced, but compelled to live separate from her family for six months or longer? Suppose, on the other hand, a man who thoughtlessly or with studied purpose, from strong temptation or from bitter want, should forge a note, were regarded as merely an unfortunate individual, and were placed under the kindest and most affectionate treatment — or suppose a man who had broken into a house were sent out on a voyage of pleasure, under the most captivating influences, or were taken to the Water-cure, and made to feel that the world was

his friend, all the more for his misconduct, and anxious to restore him to a sound moral condition — or, suppose a poor man, who had stolen a horse, were placed in some comfortable office with a good salary, and otherwise treated with kindness and consideration — such practices would hardly be more absurd, and perhaps no more pernicious, than are the present methods of treating criminals and convicts.

"Society will discover, sometime in the future, that moral invalids are more verily unfortunates than the subjects of typhoid fever or consumption; that not only the dictates of humanity but the true interests of society, require for such persons, careful and scientific treatment — sometimes perhaps, severe and heroic treatment — but always kind and humane treatment. The time will come when there will be no such thing as punishment spoken of nor thought of. Prisons will all be converted into moral hospitals, with able, experienced and humane managers."

CHAPTER IX.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

HERE now, as an essential link in the chain of our narrative, we present a new character.

Mary Wilfred was a comely, modest and amiable young person, nearly the age of Leon Gaylord. Gentle and sympathetic, she had long been his mother's favorite in their Cincinnati home. Entirely out of love for her — namely, out of pure love for Leon's mother,— she took an interest in Leon also; often tendering her kindly services in his behalf.

It often happened, in the evening, that they met — Mary and Leon — at his mother's cottage. Thus an agreeable social acquaintance, and even a friendship, had been steadily growing up between them. No other kind of feeling whatever — not even the shadow of a passion — that is to say, none at least on the part of Leon — had for a moment been thought of.

It is a generally admitted fact that circumstances alter cases. Logically, no case can be fully comprehended until all the circumstances attending it are known, with their specific gravity and their pressure upon the particular case in question. The case must be understood also, as well as the circumstances attending it. What amount of pressure, and what kind of

pressure, will it bear? Also, the person who assumes to judge of the case must be in a healthy condition. It is just as absurd for a sickly person to sit in the judgment seat, as it is to weigh goods upon rickety scales. It is asserted by some very eminent medical authorities, that scarcely a man or woman can be found in perfect health, at the age of thirty years, or upwards. The object of all this is to show that the only proper rule by which to judge other people, is the rule of charity. At this stage of the narrative, it would be very uncharitable to even suspect that Mary Wilfred was actuated by any motives but simple and pure kindness towards Leon's mother.

Mary had known of all Leon's recent troubles on account of Bertha Bower; and her heart was touched with pity — namely, pity for *Leon's mother*, on account of her anxious efforts to restore him to cheerfulness.

Fervently did Mary join in these efforts for *her* sake — for the sake of dear Mrs. Gaylord — and in no wise whatever for her own sake, nor yet for Leon's. Mary wanted this fact to be very distinctly understood. She meant to be conscientious and religiously truthful, no doubt. But, for all this, you and I understand, dear reader, that Leon was her load-stone, whether she knew it or not; whatever she might say about it, or even think about it. She found it out before long, herself.

At this formidable crisis — this turning point in the life of Leon Gaylord — formidable chiefly on account of its weakness — however paradoxical this may seem

— his forces were all exhausted — all his moral and mental forces. Spent and exhausted were his nervous tone and self-protective power. Defenceless and non-resistant was he. Mary's unselfish efforts soon told upon him, kindling new life and purpose within him. Gently and innocently she moulded his spirit — plastic now from mere inertia.

Samson, when nerved with holy ardor, striving with the untamed lion, slaughtering thousands of his enemies with a bare jaw-bone — proof was he against temptation and danger. But Samson, weary, dispirited and unnerved, vexed by disappointments and discouraged by treachery, was circumvented and outmanaged by a woman, and then led about and guided by a mere stripling.

In the course of the evenings, when Mary was not present — evenings so quiet, lonely and sad — Leon sat in sober conversation with his mother, and dropped in her ears such words as these — words alarming to her — for she feared that some desperate act of his might involve their lives in misery:

"Nothing have I to live for, now, but you, my own, my darling mother. And now, for your sake, I must leave Cincinnati. Else I feel that my life must be a failure — else my brain will surely be distracted. I must make some grand exertion, and plunge in some new and prolonged excitement — lest the waves of trouble overwhelm me — the towering waves of sorrow and grief. Nay, mother, I am wrong. I have still

something to live for besides — namely, to make my life a blessing to the world, in every way I can. This is my duty. So I must try to live on and preserve my health. I see there is no other way for me to do this, but to rush out and start into a new life; all different from the past, except in striving to do whatever God shall place before me. Wherever I shall be drifted, *My Mother and my duty*, shall be my motto."

Then was his mother deeply affected. Knowing Leon's exceeding danger, with heartfelt emotion, she replied:

"Leon, my dear son, I have been thinking of something new. Well you know how I have shared both your joy and sorrow; have felt all your disappointments and griefs; have striven to lighten all your burdens; have studied to smooth the thorny path of your young life, and in every way have sought to relieve and comfort you in your sad afflictions. Have you well considered what cause you have for unbounded thanksgiving? It is well with you, my son, notwithstanding this temporary darkness. Well have you escaped misfortune. Divine Providence has saved you. Now you should bear your crosses with a light and grateful heart — all your crosses and disappointments on account of the loss of Bertha Bower — a loss which is rather your inestimable gain. My son, I pray you listen to my counsel. I have considered it well, and am confident there is sound philosophy in it. Choose a successor to Bertha. In your choice, let the hand of

Heaven direct you. Let some gentle and sweet spirit take Bertha's place in your affection — some loving spirit, faithful, affectionate and unwavering. Have you ever thought of Mary Wilfred? thought of her mild and genial disposition? thought of her sweet and gentle bearing? of her generous and unselfish nature? of her constancy, patient perseverance and her never failing kindness? Leon, if you could only love her as a wife, I am sure I could love her as a daughter."

Then, at first without making any reply, Leon sat in silent and abstracted thought; with averted eyes, and with features sad and downcast. Long he sat, motionless, as if in anxious study. When at last he aroused and came to his speech, the young man said:

"Yes, dear mother, I have often thought of Mary, in her earnest and persevering efforts to save me from insanity. I will not deny that I regard her with great friendship and more than ordinary interest. But not by any means as I have loved Bertha. Never in this world, can I love another so intensely. The merest taper, compared with the sun, is like the love that remains in my heart for another, as compared with that which has gone out of it for Bertha. Though the excitement of such a change as this which you have now proposed, might divert me somewhat from my sufferings, still it would be unjust and mean towards Mary; I could not be so base and contemptible."

Mrs. Gaylord still again replied to Leon, rising more and more in earnestness, as she proceeded:

"Leon dear, I am sure that Mary loves you truly. Now, if you will only make a little effort, and cultivate her affection, and then wed hér, with her many excellencies, and with all your beautiful impressions of her, she will surely grow in your esteem and love; and do much, very much, to aid and bless you — much to comfort, redeem and save you. As you become more intimately acquainted with her, you will also become more and more interested in her. You will be amused and cheered by her conversation. With her amiable traits of character, her many resources and pleasant expedients, she will engage your thoughts and keep them from painful and unprofitable subjects. Unfold your heart to her, my son — all your heart as touching yourself and as touching Bertha. Tell her your plans and purposes. Take her into your confidence. You can treat her kindly, at least. Leave the rest to her and to me."

Had Leon been fully himself, and in his normal condition, mentally, notwithstanding his unchanging love and reverence for his mother, and his predisposition in ordinary matters to follow her counsel almost blindly, he would never have yielded to her persuasion, upon such a question as this — never. He was too spirited, too sensible, and too manly to have done such a weak thing. His spirit was all broken and subdued now. He felt that the world, except his mother, had all gone from him. He had not yet recovered his elasticity and power of resistance. In fact, his mind was not in a

healthy state, and to tell the truth, Mrs. Gaylord was almost as sadly unhinged as Leon. Her excessive love for her son, amounting almost to idolatry, and her intense and long-continued anxiety on account of his present condition, dreading as she did the supervention of some overshadowing calamity — all together had quite disqualified her as a safe and judicious adviser; especially upon this question. Yet for these very reasons she was the more positive, all the more urgent and all the more influential with him. So at length, in a tone of painful sadness, he yielded to her earnest and cogent entreaties. And thus he answered her:

"Dearest mother, I can see no brightness in the future. But I have ever found you my best friend. The course which you advise, I frankly confess, would not commend itself to me were it not advised by you. I cannot answer your reasons and arguments. No one else, I confess, would be as acceptable to me as Mary Wilfred. So now, with your unreserved consent, approval and recommendation, Bertha being out of my reach and gone for ever — dead to me and buried, as it were, out of my sight — I will consent to give myself to Mary — if with such express — such humiliating conditions, and with all the dark hazards of the future, she will condescend to accept me."

Just then, as if by some private arrangement, or at least as a singular coincident, who should lift the latch and enter the room, with an air the most innocent and bewitching — who but gentle Mary Wilfred.

After exchanging cordial salutations and placing Mary at her ease, Mrs. Gaylord thus addressed the bright and blushing girl:

"Mary, my dear young friend, I have been thinking of something new — something so charming, that I must not keep it from you. Besides, it is a matter which requires your counsel, and possibly your assistance. It is something which relates particularly to this boy of mine — this very unhappy, but very fortunate boy. For his sake — or, perhaps I should say, for mine — I trust you will lend me your sympathy and counsel. For it is something which involves a very pregnant question connected with his future life and happiness."

"If I am to be the subject of your conversation," said Leon, "it were better for me to be absent." Suiting the action to the word, he arose and withdrew.

Then, under much excitement of feeling, Mrs. Gaylord thus proceeded:

"My dear Mary, much am I beholden to you. Your tender and loving services for my poor Leon, while passing through the valley and shadow of Death, were as pure and unselfish as the ministrations of a dear sister. What would you do if I should ask you to come and be my daughter? if I should ask you to come and take Leon for your husband? I fear that such a request from me will shock and grieve you beyond forgiveness. But I pray you it may not. A mother, you know, is liable to misjudge in such a case, and to com-

mit grave offenses against propriety. When her idol is in question — when the darling of her heart is in danger — she loses her wits; her senses are inverted; her brain all runs into her heart. She must be forgiven, of course, whatever her folly or presumption. But, Mary dear, must I — need I — apologize? No! I see the answer upon your sweet face. Your affectionate heart says no. You know the trials of poor Leon; all about his insane love for Bertha Bower; of her heartless and cruel behavior towards him, and of his great disappointment. You know all about his noble manliness and resolution — how generously he forgives her cruel and unfeeling inconstancy, and still frankly confesses towards the trifling and heartless girl his unchanging and undying love — his love still unchanging and still supreme. He confesses that he loves you, Mary, as a dear sister, and that he will strive to love you better and still better, if you will only consent to take him 'for better, for worse,' with such an express understanding as this, and upon such peculiar and strange conditions."

For a few moments Mary was embarrassed and confused, and astonished and pleased, all at once and together. She was not conscious at the time of any painful or disagreeable sensations whatever. She could hardly understand her own feelings. How in the world, then, could she make others understand them? And how could she be expected to answer Mrs. Gaylord on the spot? Neither could such a state of mind

be justly regarded as strange, considering that Mary was so inexperienced, so sensitive and so undesigning. However, she was a wide-awake girl, and not very slow to right herself in perplexing emergencies and unanticipated situations; and, with all her reserve and diffidence, she had courage and nerve and a quick intellect. When she came to the pinch there was no tremulous indecision, which is always the offspring of weakness, but prompt action.

So in a very few moments she decided upon her answer. Thus she bravely but tremblingly answered Mrs. Gaylord:

"My very kind and dear friend, this is a very strange proposition which you have made, and which, for a few moments, has thrown me in some confusion, on account of the peculiar and exceptional conditions attached to it; yet, it is so full of love and confidence, and is made with such sweet overflowing frankness, that I feel obliged to meet you cordially in the same spirit, and to answer you as frankly and unreservedly as if you were my own dear mother.

"It would be vain and foolish for me to attempt any longer to disguise my affection for your dear and noble son. With such love, or with such remnants of it as he can command, I will ask no better fortune, no higher attainment in life. By his strange and strong devotion toward Bertha Bower; by his anguish, so deep and heart-rending, on account of her treachery and defection; by his generous and magnanimous for-

giveness of her wicked and inexcusable conduct; by his firm and unshaken purpose to resist and overcome all his evil fortunes; by his earnest and successful efforts to maintain his integrity against all provocation on one hand, and all temptation on the other; by his uniform gentleness and patience, and the splendid nobility of his character exhibited through all his bitter experience; I confess myself his captive and willing prisoner. So now I surrender myself to his honor, unconditionally. Gladly and without hesitation I accept and take him 'for better, for worse,' and on his own express terms and conditions. Even were these conditions more severe, I would neither shrink nor falter."

At this point in the conversation Leon, by some unaccountable chance, re-entered the room, apparently in a self-possessed frame of mind. Then, with characteristic sweetness and gentleness, his mother broke the ice between him and Mary. In a manner and tone which inspired them both with confidence, thus she introduced the main question:

"Now, my dearest Leon, have no more doubt nor despondency; for all is well. For my part, I believe that Providence has taken the matter in hand for you. Mary's heart — God bless her — seems to beat in full harmony with yours. Now, my dear children, for fear I may not have properly represented you to each other, you may take the matter into your own hands and settle it for yourselves."

Then, with a smile of satisfaction, she arose and withdrew, leaving the children to their own deliberations.

Leon now felt that the time for choosing had gone by. He was in honor bound to go forward and lead in the conversation — a conversation pregnant with destiny. Feeling the full weight of the subject, and rising to the occasion, with a fluttering heart and with trembling accents, without delay or circumlocution, he thus approached the central topic.

"Mary, I need not tell you my strange and tragic history, for you are already acquainted with it. Bertha Bower, as you well know, was my idol. Never had I worshiped at any mortal shrine but that of my mother and that of Bertha. All the rest of the world was as nothing whatever, to me. Plighted was our faith and we were pledged by the most sacred promise — pledged forever to each other. For some good and sufficient reason — good and sufficient beyond all doubt — however strange and unaccountable to me, she has taken wing and flown from me forever. I can never, never forget her — never cease to adore her. While my memory must ever hold her as in a casket, as a costly and precious treasure — precious beyond comparison — still in real life I must regard her as dead — but also as transfigured and translated — as an object in memory and thought of ineffable beauty and a joy forever; but as too unsubstantial—too ethereal—for the purposes of this sublunary life. I confess, Mary, I love

you as a sister. Dearly do I love and esteem you, for your unselfish and sisterly virtues and your disinterested kindness. Your society is agreeable and full of intellectual fragrance. Your voice and your manners are to me exceedingly pleasant, and altogether your presence is most enjoyable. But I must not conceal the fact, that no passion like that I have felt towards Bertha can ever again exist within the heart of my heart. Allowing me to be the judge, I should say, in all honesty, that such a heart as mine, in its present condition, is altogether too poor and barren for you. Still, in justice to myself, I must declare that you are the next in my affections — the very next to Bertha, the morning star of my life, which has now set to rise no more, and my ever idolized mother, who has ever been dearer to me, by far, than my own life.

"After all this, Mary — with all these conditions and abatements — what less than brazen presumption would it be to offer you my hand, with such an apology of a heart. But I have something else to tell you. Perhaps you will say it is the very worst of all. Before you return me an answer, I must disclose to you an important secret — unless you are ready to say *no*, without hearing any more. If you are not yet ready to speak this chilling word, I will proceed to make the disclosure at once. Whatever else I do, this one thing I have decided upon — God sparing our lives. I have decided and fully determined to leave this country, within a few weeks, for California. Now, Mary, I have

told you the worst. I have told you all. Should you upon the whole, strangely conclude to accept me, which I can hardly think probable, with all these objections — all broken and ruined as I am — I shall do my best to make your situation endurable. I shall leave you in charge of mother, and mother in charge of you. The thought of this will be a great relief to me, when in far off desert regions, where the Indian, the bear and the buffalo roam supreme, over mountain and plain, through gulch and canyon, I shall be toiling for gold in the mines. Finally, should my life perchance be spared, and prosperous, after tedious years of absence, among the unimagined perils of the wilderness, faithful to you and my dear mother, I shall return to Cincinnati with wealth and fortune. If it shall please God, we will settle down in a home of affluence, to spend the remnant of our lives, let us hope, in domestic happiness, in social enjoyments, and such labors and enterprises for the improvement of society as Heaven shall direct."

Leon had discovered, before he finished speaking, that the smooth current of Mary's happiness was seriously ruffled. Her heart was deeply saddened, and she gave expression to her sorrow in gushing tears and sobs. After this there was a moment of painful silence; which at length, she was the first to break:

"Whatever you say, dear Leon, whatever you resolve, whatever you do, still my answer is *yes, with all my heart.*"

Then, without any further discussion or delay, did they solemnly and unreservedly pledge themselves to each other, heart and hand.

Mary, it appeared, was abundantly willing to take all the chances with Leon. However, there is no doubt but, with the faith and hope of woman, the wish giving form and force to the thought, she believed that the influence of woman, properly directed, might divert his preposterous love for Bertha into a more appropriate channel; and also might correct his youthful mania for novel and dangerous schemes, and for bold and reckless adventures — might divert and entice him from his wild and reckless expedition to California.

In due time Mrs. Gaylord returned to the rescue. After learning of her great triumph, and after congratulating Leon, Mary and herself, upon what she felt so certain was an act of Providence, the other side of the picture — the California side — was shown to her by Mary; meantime showering her warm and plentiful tears upon it. Leon had partially prepared his mother for some such announcement. She, by the device of organizing a marriage between him and Mary, had hoped to save him from what she feared might lead to unsoundness of mind. For she recollected having heard her mother tell of some distant relative, by marriage, that had been carried to the lunatic asylum. She had hoped by this matrimonial device, not only to rescue her son from this appalling danger, but also to settle his mind and give him a new and healthier tone

of ambition. Now it seemed that although she had succeeded so perfectly with her device, she had failed as completely in securing its contemplated results. Thus, after all her trouble and anxiety, and after all her congratulations and rejoicings, her plan was likely to prove an inglorious failure.

A woman never gives up — at least, hardly ever. And a mother, of all the frail mortals upon this planet of ours, seems to be the only one who is never in despair, never discouraged, never weary; but always hopeful, always striving, always helping, whether in poverty or wealth, in innocence or in guilt, in honor or in disgrace, in sickness or in health.

Mother! The holiest word in the language but one. It is love without bottom. It is hope without fear. It is faith without question. It is purity without a blemish. It is the only form of humanity without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. It is impossible for the imagination to frame any thing lovelier, any thing whiter, either human or angelic — either in earth or in heaven, except the throne of the Infinite.

Mrs. Gaylord, though she understood Leon's resolute character, still hoped that, with Mary's help, she would be able to carry the day, and save him from the sacrifice. With the most poignant emotion, and with tears of entreaty, she besieged him, and with argument and warning sought to dissuade him from his perilous and insane expedition. She pictured in vivid colors his dreary hardships, his frightful, dangerous and extreme

privations, his herculean toils and sad disappointments, his agonizing pains both of body and of mind, his social and domestic sacrifices, and his multifarious risks and exposures.

Their sobbings he answered with tears. Their earnest prayers and protestations he answered with manly reasons and sound postulates. Their passionate and eloquent entreaties he answered with firm, earnest and clearly expressed convictions. In a brave and yet sympathetic spirit, he pacified, as best he could, the pleadings of affection.

Mrs. Gaylord. Leon, is this my return for all the pains, anxieties and toils I have suffered for you? Not to speak of the claims of affection, do you think, Leon, that your conscience will be satisfied — that whatever the result shall be, you can look toward heaven and say, I have done my duty, as it was shown to me? Have you considered the almost certain destruction that will befall you? and then the cruel and life-long suffering it will bring upon your mother? A hundred to one, my precious boy, you will never return. What, then, will it avail, that you have sacrificed everything — yourself, your mother and your precious bride? Can you afford to relinquish your business prospects here for the lonely desert, where dangerous animals and more dangerous savages will be lying in wait for you? where cold and hunger, and, perchance, sickness, may overtake you? where there are no luxuries to regale you, no mother's words to cheer and soothe you —

nothing but dreariness, suffering, and, at last, perhaps a forlorn and lonely death? What, dear Leon, is the compensation for all this? Is it a kingdom — a contingent crown? Is it a probable reward, even in gold? Have you not ever found me a true friend, Leon, and a safe counsellor? Why, then, do you not mind me now? I feel that I am inspired and commissioned to save you from this yawning abyss. I tell you that success in business will be far surer here, and far more ample than you will find it in the wild adventure you seek. Is the field *here* too small for my boy? Have you not been well satisfied thus far with your success here? Why not be contented, then, and let well-enough alone?

Leon. Dearest mother, while I feel all the force of your most affecting words, the arguments which you have brought up are narrow and unworthy of you. They are all of a personal and selfish character. I must take higher ground, mother. I am moved by a spirit within me, resistless in its power, to launch forth into the far West and do my share of the work. I verily believe it is the same spirit that spake to Jacob and Moses and Abraham, of old. I feel that I must not and cannot disobey it.

Am not I as well formed and as compactly moulded as other leaders and pioneers of the great West? Must not the doors of that vast region be opened to the world? Have not I as good a right as others to distinguish myself, and to earn the rewards of enter-

prise and of self-sacrifice? Or, shall I, with brain and muscle well developed, selfishly shrink from labor and exposure in the great field of the world, and thus shirk my duty, and by indolence and cowardly inaction, dwindle away into dwarfish meanness, leaving the world no better than I found it, and bringing shame upon my mother? Failure of success in an earnest and worthy effort is far more honorable than the failure to make such an effort. Far better will it be to die in California, in the pursuit of a good and noble object, than to live on and on in Cincinnati, with no object but the mere animal enjoyment of life. Life, without the toils and perils incident to ambition and enterprise, without disappointments and privations for the sake of humanity, without losses, pains and sacrifices, in the path of duty, must be a fruitless and worthless affair. Without contrast and excitement it must be dull, monotonous and tiresome. Without conferring some benefits upon society, it must be as waste and barren as a desert.

(As to whether this would have been Leon's course of reasoning had his bride been Bertha Bower, the reader must be allowed to form his own opinion.)

Thus were their efforts all in vain. Useless and unavailing was all expostulation. Leon's resolution had been deliberately formed, and his mind was firm. His new drama of life was composed of scenes of a new and high order — wider in their scope and more unselfish in their character — scenes in which Cupid was

assigned a new and less conspicuous rôle — a subordinate and less important position upon the stage — scenes fit to be enacted by beings of a sublime destiny — beings destined to be immortal.

The main question being now settled — Mary and Leon having agreed to join their fortunes at the altar — there was much to be thought of and much to be attended to. The ladies lost no time, but proceeded at once with their preparations for the wedding. They soon had everything in readiness. There was no sunshine — or none to speak of — about this preparation work; none of the glee and jollity and laughing delight that usually accompany such proceedings.

Their nuptial joys were modest, chastened and subdued. Quiet, hushed and sober were all the appointments of the occasion. There was a haze of doubt and undefined apprehension in the air. There were trembling hearts and many serious misgivings. Not that anything but cordiality and the sweetest understanding existed between the parties; not that any regrets found a place in Leon's bosom on account of the step he was taking. The reader understands it all. It was on account of his cool and stubborn purpose to leave them and go into the far wilderness. The female heart is always hopeful — or nearly always — and their sadness would have been deeper than it was on that occasion, had they not hoped against hope, and almost believed against the evidence of their senses, that something would yet intervene — perchance something

notably providential — to save their precious husband and son from the abyss into which he seemed determined to plunge. Thus were solemnized the marriage rites.

A circumstance which contributed much to lighten up the atmosphere of the occasion was the fact that Leon, against the dictates of his own heart, maintained a smiling face and a cheerful bearing. For, in spite of all his deep-seated convictions — in spite of all his conscientious endeavors to exclude and drive her from his thoughts, still his heart and his head were filled with Bertha.

As to Mary, how could she have been otherwise than sober? The higher in the heavens she soared upon the wings of Love, the farther would she have to fall, in case Leon's purpose should remain unalterable. The stronger the ties of affection that bound her to him, the more painful would be the separation when it must come. Mary had no right to murmur. She was well-informed, and knew of the situation before she contracted and gave herself to Leon. The reader knows all about that. Yet no doubt we should make some allowance for Mary's confidence in his maturer judgment and the influence she might reasonably have expected to exert upon him; by both which means she might fairly have counted upon a relinquishment of his western expedition. Every day and almost every hour, she saw new reason to be less and less hopeful of such a result.

So of course, her joy and happiness upon the bridal

occasion, were mingled with sorrow. The thought of his early departure to the wild and then misty regions of California, for a period so extended and withal so very indefinite, overcast her prospective life with sadness and gloom.

Mrs Gaylord was proud of her son — as she had good reason to be — for his manly courage, his large and powerful brain and his enterprising spirit. Still she was overwhelmed with sorrow at the thought of separation from him — at the thought that she should probably see his face no more. She wondered, beyond measure, at his unaccountable ambition, leading him into such fearful and unknown perils, so far from home, from herself and from Mary. She learned at last, with surprise, astonishment and dismay — both she and Mary made the heart-rending discovery — that Leon's purposes, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, were abiding and unchangeable; that a power higher than human — that an influence stronger than woman's, were it that of sweetheart, wife or mother — now that he was himself again, and had shaken off his weakness and effeminacy — that a higher power must be called into requisition to change his mind and to divert him from his purpose.

Leon had neglected none of his duties in the bank, but had discharged them all faithfully and satisfactorily. He and General Proctor were warm personal friends, as well as confidants in business. When Leon informed the General that he was about to assume the

responsibilities of a husband, he was struck with much surprise and solicitude. "Leon," said he, "as a friend, you must be aware that I feel an interest in whatever you do. This is a very important step which you are about to take, and I confess it is an enigma to me. Why, upon the eve of your California enterprise, you should form such a connection as this, needs an explanation. You would be young enough to marry after your return, if you should live. Why, if I may ask, did you not consult me about it?"

Leon. You would hardly be interested, General, in all the little story of my life. To me the circumstances which have led to this result are full of interest. That of course you would naturally expect. In preparing to leave home for so long and so uncertain a period of time, I have been much exercised with regard to my dear mother. It was a long time before I could settle in my mind how to leave her in the best possible way to ensure her comfort. Being entirely alone as to relatives, excepting her, I never could feel reconciled to the idea of going away, till I thought of this plan — namely, to leave with her, for company and companionship, a daughter-in-law; knowing at the same time, that she loved Mary almost as if she were her own daughter. My mother even suggested the idea to me, herself; and of that I was very glad. Her purpose however was very different from mine. While it was hers to divert me from my Western enterprise, it was my purpose to leave her as comfortable as

possible, with just the company that would please her best. Mary of course is a very worthy and lovable girl. While I must confess that I have but little heart in all this, for my own sake, I am delighted with the arrangement on my mother's account.

General P. Well, Leon, I now see and understand your plan. I approve of it, provided you have made a wise selection, and provided the girl is sufficiently infatuated to accept you, knowing that she is so soon to be bereaved and widowed, without the right of remarrying. I confess, Leon, at my conservative age I should hardly have advised, for you, the course you have adopted for yourself; yet I approve of it now. For I apprehend that you will see, and that your mother will see, ere long, that while it may lead you into hardships and perils, it may save you from still greater perils and more terrible hardships — the hardships of the tented field, and all the perils, terrors and sufferings of war.

Of course we can never see before us, except as through a glass, very, very darkly. This, no doubt, is for our good. Our uncertainty with regard to the future is probably the greatest of blessings. Certain rules are laid down by the sages, but they are like rules concerning the weather — all fail in a drouth. Constant vigilance is the only price of success. It seems to many — this plan of things — as a very mistaken plan. So many wrongs might be prevented, so many accidents and evils avoided, if human rules of

action were invariably exact and reliable in their working. God knows best. Man must not be allowed to sleep; for sleep is death. The more there is to be done the better. If life were to be reduced to infallible rules in its various departments, it would become tiresome, and, ere long, intolerable. Our greatest wisdom is folly when it crosses the wisdom of the God of Nature. We must, nevertheless, have rules and maxims; which, though not unfailingly reliable, it is never safe nor wise for a man to neglect. They may help us wonderfully in almost every question in life. But if we sleep over them too securely, we may shoot down the cataract, or be blown in fragments through the air. Without the spice of uncertainty life would become insipid. There is one rule of life that is infallible; and which, Leon, I know you have adopted. Namely: There can be no real and permanent success without integrity.

Leon, my prayers and my blessings will follow you. Remember, I am to supply you with whatever means you may lack to go with. Thus far I will share in the venture and abide the results.

Now, when the hymenial rites were finished — when the marriage scenes were over — Leon began, in a business way, to make preparations for his great journey across the plains. He spent much time in conversations with Mary and his mother, endeavoring to reconcile them to his views and the inevitable decree

of Destiny. He repeated to them the predictions of General Proctor, concerning the great war that was so surely impending, and the dangers he, Leon, would be likely to escape, as well as the dangers he might encounter, by going West. Mrs. Gaylord had great confidence in General Proctor's judgment; and, in some measure, it served to mitigate her sufferings of mind to learn that he approved of Leon's course, and was ready and willing to furnish him with money for the journey.

In the kindest and most judicious manner, Leon made provision, as ample as possible, for their comfort during his absence; promising to send them money from time to time, as soon as it should be in his power to do so.

Nor less assiduous were they in preparing him a compact and suitable outfit, and in studying and contriving various methods to make his journey as endurable as possible, in the nature of things. They invented and wrought numerous little articles and devices for his trunk, that would be likely, in some way, to gratify him and serve his convenience. At least they would be certain to call up his grateful recollections of them, from day to day, when he should look upon their dear, anxious faces and hear their sweet voices no more.

With systematic and untiring industry, in a month's time he had everything in readiness. With well chosen arguments, with unshaken firmness, and yet with constant and overflowing kindness, he had overcome all

opposition, and had inspired his friends and family with a spirit of reconciliation, and also with the conviction that he was doing, after all, a very sensible and even noble thing. With a level and considerate head, he had secured the safest and most favorable means of transit. Now, with courage amounting to heroism, and with prodigious nerve, when the appointed day arrived, he was ready, with a cheerful face, waiting for the moment.

"Now," he said to his wife and his mother, "I am about to leave you for awhile; but I have the satisfaction to know that I shall leave you in far better hands than my own. I pray you to remember that I, also, shall be in the very best of keeping. For I do not intend to go beyond the jurisdiction of our Heavenly Father. As His sun will continue to shine upon us, so will the same Divine protection be extended to us all. Now, my ever precious wife and mother, let us also remember, as true Christians, that even if death should overtake us, either here or elsewhere, we shall still be in the kingdom of God. Nature requires that we should hold death in dread. Reason and religion both teach us that it is the opening of our prison doors and the gate of heaven. Such occasions as this are necessary to try our religion and our philosophy. If we have the genuine articles, they will now assert themselves. Though we part for awhile, you will be ever present in my affections, and often, very often, my thoughts. I know that I shall not be forgotten in your prayers."

Then, leaving Mary as his mother's daughter and companion, with the earnest prayer and benediction of their fatherly pastor, Leon kissed them ardently, again and again, mingling his tears with theirs, blessing them lovingly with his last words; and then tore himself from their embraces.

When his voice was silent to their ears, and his face was no longer seen by them, it seemed as if the beautiful day had turned into dismal darkness.

CHAPTER X.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

REASON had resumed its office. Bertha Bower had recovered her reason and her health. Full of the springs of life and youthful blood, powerful Nature, kindest and best of physicians, aided by troops of loving and devoted friends, in process of time, brought her through the terrible crisis.

Then she mourned for the death of Leon — mourned and grieved exceedingly. She was weeping almost constantly — not only through the day, but often in the night. Many were the mornings when her pillow was found literally soaked with tears. Thus for several weeks her eyes were flood-gates. Tears — bitter, scalding tears — are Nature's solvent. Tears dissolve the heartache — copious, flowing tears. All who heard her grievous moaning and witnessed her pitiful sufferings — all who possessed hearts of flesh and not of stone — yearned towards her with tender sympathy and pity.

How elastic are youthful natures! How promptly, how kindly do they yield to impressions! How readily do they rebound to their normal condition. Thus, with loving kindness, hath God provided.

As every spring of metal hath a certain extreme

point, beyond which the power of retroaction is weakened, and impaired, thus, also, the human soul hath limits to its full rebounding power.

Although Leon was so certainly dead — dead to Bertha's understanding and sense — he was ever-present in her imagination; which the powerful yearning of her heart wove up with itself into a kind of morbid realization; not amounting, it is true, to downright insanity, but coming little if any short of monomania. Whether this can be explained by any known laws of psychology or not — she seemed, much of the time, to be in company with Leon. She was confident that his spirit attended her, serving as her guide and guardian angel. She fancied that he knew all her thoughts and feelings and commiserated her grievous sufferings and desolate loneliness. And such assurance did she express upon this subject that some of her friends were inclined to believe that she could not be mistaken. Certain spiritualistic persons triumphantly pointed to Bertha as a very striking evidence — almost a demonstration — that departed spirits, under certain circumstances, do commune with the living.

Whatever this belief, whatever may be the views of the cultured reader upon modern Spiritualism, there is a well-attested exterior influence, intelligent and most mysterious, which sometimes leads and controls the operations of the mind, whether asleep or awake.

Bertha supposed that Leon was dead — took it for

granted, without having a hope or even a thought to the contrary. Of course, she knew nothing and could have had no surmises of what he was actually about. Yet, in visions of the night, she often seemed to see him as with her natural eyes. She saw his noble form, stalwart and majestic, sometimes alone, in sickness, in pain or in peril, far away from fireside, home and friends, courageously buffeting with adverse fortunes; sometimes in the wild woods or in the desert, buffeting with savage warriors, battling with the elements, with wild beasts and with wild Indians; saw him leading others through dangers and hardships, risking his own life to rescue the lives of strangers; or resolutely journeying through the snow, over the mountains, through deep and dangerous morasses, on the sandy plains and in the rugged canyons; sometimes climbing trees for safety, or swimming rivers for escape; saw him laughing, leaping, and sporting with his comrades, or earnestly striving, laboring, and digging, with an anxious face and a sweating brow; steadily growing into strength, influence and authority; gaining friends and gaining riches; saw him talking with his brave companions — eager listeners — telling them of his childhood pleasures, and of his childhood experiences in Charming Valley; telling of his misfortunes and sad afflictions; perhaps telling them of Bertha Bower.

Her father, with a quick eye, had for a long time been convinced of his error. Repentance — bitter and dolorous repentance — now fluttered at his window

and now boldly entered his dwelling. Like a gloomy and ominous night-bird, it hovered around his heart and settled down upon it. Now he very distinctly saw and very profoundly felt, that he had wronged his daughter — that he had seriously and cruelly injured his only, his most precious child — felt that in his self-complacency he had undertaken to usurp the office and authority of God Himself; and had profaned the "holy of holies" in the temple of her heart, by placing her affections in the balances against money. He saw now, though too late, that he had been blind, selfish and cruel — saw the folly and sin of Mammon-worship — nay, saw its criminality and appalling danger.

Rosco Bower certainly loved money to excess. There was no use in disputing that. He loved it to idolatry. This, of course, was not a self-evident proposition, as you would say in some branch of mathematics, but it was so nearly of that nature as not to be disputed by any body that knew him. If not self-evident, it was self-proven — that is, it was proven by himself and by his selfishness; and so well proven that the man who would have disputed it, would also have insisted that the world is flat. Rosco had one saving virtue; but not quite enough of the article to save him. He loved his daughter with sincere fatherly affection. When he beheld and looked upon her sorrow, and saw the agony and desolation of her heart, which had been the result of his own mismanagement — of his foolish wisdom and selfishness — when he saw his signal

failure and his capital mistake, he was seized with remorse and anguish. Whether remorse is just the right word here, we are not quite sure. We must leave that to the reader. It was certainly a very painful state of mind. Money now, for a brief moment, changed its color in his eyes — lost its lustre, its flavor and its fragrance. During this one particular moment, it seemed to Rosco as the merest trash and refuse. During the brief period that the Divine influence was upon him, he was flooded with a new kind of light — a light which enabled him to see things about as they were — a light which revealed to him a frightful, yawning gulf, in very startling proximity to himself.

O that the past might be recalled! O, the thought of Leon Gaylord! of a life so fresh and so full of promise, sent by him — by Rosco — into exile! O, that this life should have been so suddenly and so early extinguished! And all through his own interested meddling! through Rosco's own selfish instigation, meddling and deceit!

"But may there not be another side to all this? Was I, after all, so much at fault? Was I not acting for what I honestly believed to be the welfare of my child? Was not the boy free, as well as his mother? I did precisely as I had agreed with them. I did not compel them to go. And the woman said that she had thought of the same thing herself. Very true, he would probably not have gone had I not interposed. How could I have foreseen results? Suppose he had

lived on in Charming Valley. Might not his misfortunes have been just as great, or even greater? He might have slipped into the river and been drowned. Or he might have been bitten by a mad dog. No, that could not have been, because there has been no such animal here. A rattlesnake might — no, there are no rattlesnakes. But there are plenty of hornets, and he might have died by the sting of a hornet. Hornets, it is true, are not usually fatal; but sometimes they make out to be, if the blood is depraved — and that might have been the case with Leon's blood. Or he might have died of a fever here, as well as in Cincinnati. Perhaps, after all, it was ordered by a kind and merciful Providence. At all events, it is all over. Leon is dead; and realities are not dreams. Neither can the shadow be brought back upon the dial. What is done is done. I confess I would not do it over. Now, I do hope our dear child will soon forget him."

Rosco now sought, by various methods, to atone for his former errors. Although he could never recall Leon's life, he was resolved to do all in his power to retrieve and heal his own conscience. There is no doubt of Rosco's repentance, if that word means *simply being sorry;* but whether it was the real soul-saving kind, is another question. His chief opportunity of proving his sincerity seemed to be in striving to restore his daughter to her former cheerfulness.

He sought, for her sake, and regardless of whatever time, effort or money it might require — by whatever

pains or expense — he sought, in Bertha's behalf, every comfort and luxury, every diversion and amusement, every privilege and favor, within his reach.

This state of mind, however, was of short continuance with him. Therefore it may well be suspected that his contrition was a spasmodic and spurious article, whose elements, texture and composition were simple, pure and unadulterated selfishness. The avaricious spirit lost its hold upon him only for a brief period. Soon again he began to speak and talk of Forester. Notwithstanding, as it must be admitted, he loved Bertha dearly, he was often praising Forester, in the most glowing and extravagant language. Doubtless, so far as he made the young man's personal character the subject of consideration, he thought well of it. Why? Because he weighed him and measured him and gauged him, as he did everything else, by the standard and rule of money. He knew, or thought he knew, beyond all question, that Forester's father was wealthy. Thus, it may be seen how, with real love for his daughter, he was still blind to Forester's faults, and still favored his love suit.

Oh, the baleful, blinding, distorting influence of avarice. It disqualifies a man for anything noble or unselfish. It makes him a tyrant, and it makes him dishonest. It subordinates to itself all the faculties of his nature. It paralyzes his conscience and thoroughly emasculates all his virtues. It is the cancer of the soul. It gnaws and eats everything that comes in its

way; spreading and corroding, to nourish and enlarge itself. Insidious as poison, it permeates every fibre of the man; corrupting the brain and hardening the heart. It subsidizes Law and Government and Life. It profanes religion and tramples upon humanity. It laughs at the moral virtues, and it sanctifies vice, and crowns it with many honors. It is the root of all evil, social, national and individual.

Thus it is clear that this mild and gentle creature, this pure and loving spirit, was not captured by fair means, but by various indirect and dishonest influences; by falsehoods and false appearances the most shameful; by the methods of true kindness, yet by the most disgraceful wrongs and the most outrageous crimes; by artful tricks, conspiracies and plottings; by the basest deception, and by foul play the most cowardly. Thus, at last, was Bertha overpowered and captured.

Real love for Forester of course she had not. Such a thing was not possible. Genuine, true love cannot be bought nor stolen; cannot be secured by fraud or hypocrisy. But she had cultivated a warm and grateful friendship towards him, founded upon his persistent devotion and attention, and his many demonstrations, so extravagant and delicate, of affectionate regard for her. Her father's earnest and variously expressed wishes also exerted upon her a decisive, if not a controlling influence, in the same direction. Little did she suspect, in her innocence and purity, the bottom-

less corruption and deceit that were hidden by a glittering and polished surface. Little did she dream of the utter worthlessness, falsehood and villainy that were festering underneath the covering of his specious and smiling visage.

While Bertha was in the great deep of her sufferings — while the wheels of affliction and grief, the great wheels of bereavement and anguish, were rolling over her, crushing her to the very earth, overwhelming her, body and soul, consuming her health, her reason and her life — Edward Forester, coward and villain, stood aghast with terror; saw his crime in all its foulness and rankness. Its hideousness and enormity frightened him. Whatever its results might be, he felt then that they could not possibly be otherwise than an inglorious abortion of his plans. But now his hopes began to revive. As Bertha's health became re-established, and as her reason was restored, his firmament brightened, and he very soon regained his cheerful manners. His motives and purposes were still unchanged — base and selfish as ever.

Whatever might have been his real sentiment towards Bertha, with his moral perversity and vileness, it could not, in the nature of things, have been Love, in the high and holy sense of the term. For that implies a prevailing correspondence of moral qualities and a mingling of soul, which simply did not and could not possibly exist between them.

They were as far apart in character as the north pole

from the south. That he was fascinated by her sweetness and grace, that he revered her for the nobility of her character, and the grandeur of her principles, is altogether probable. That he was also very largely influenced by pride and ambition of conquest, and an inflexible pertinacity of will to accomplish a fixed purpose, and defeat all opposition, there also can be no reasonable doubt.

At all events he threw himself at her feet again. With the most astounding presumption and with impudence towering almost to sublimity, he again sought her hand in marriage. While such a thing to the ordinary judgment would seem fictitious and almost incredible, we find in history, especially in the criminal branch, many notable instances in which moral extremes the most striking and characters the most antipodal, are brought together in wedlock — sometimes it is true, by extraordinary outside influences, but sometimes also, by peculiar and unaccountable attractions and fascinations — sometimes by strange coincident circumstances, seemingly providential—sometimes by the most sinister and unholy motives on one side, together, perhaps, with great persistency and magnetic positiveness; or on the other side an unselfishness and unsuspecting amiability almost or quite, amounting to weakness. No human being is invulnerable. There are various feebly-guarded points and ways of approach to the citadel of every heart, in spite of itself. When it is remembered that Bertha, only nineteen years of

age, had twice already, as it were, been through the valley and shadow of Death, and had not yet fully recovered from the effect of her struggle with mortality; considering too that the priceless solitaire of her heart had just been lost beyond hope of recovery, who could have the hardihood to accuse her of native weakness, because, under such circumstances, she was overcome at last by the powers of darkness.

"Dear Edward," she said, with scalding tears, "I am like a wrecked vessel at sea, raised and set adrift. All about me, of any value, has gone overboard, or been carried away by the storm. I have nothing whatever remaining to yield or give you. My heart is all crushed and broken, and all its substance has gone with Leon. Nothing is left of it but worthless fragments."

Forester, with false appearances of sincerity, disingenuously replied:

"These fragments are, to me, of infinite value. Freely will I give you in exchange for them, all that I have in the world — all my fortune and all my heart. Vain is my life without them."

Upon this the poor girl surrendered. With unutterable grief and sorrow, she then yielded to the irresistible force of circumstances. The enemy triumphed. Not by fair means — not by the rules of civilized warfare — but by proceedings that would be infamous even among thieves — by tactics that a savage of the wilderness would spurn as dishonorable. At last she

listened and yielded to her father's wishes — to the wishes of her father and of her suitor. With a heavy heart she finally capitulated; and sacrificed herself in marriage to Edward Forester.

Now the families were understood to be happy. Rosco Bower tried hard to believe himself very happy indeed. He had gained his point at last. It is true, there had been much more friction in gaining it than he had anticipated. He had experienced many trials and tribulations, and had seen many dark days, in which he had painfully regretted the course he had taken. Now the skies were all clear; and he felt that his conduct after all, had been correct. He congratulated himself upon his characteristic firmness of purpose and persistent straightforwardness. Bertha, it was true, had not quite regained her former cheerfulness and elasticity; but then he felt sure that she was improving daily, and would soon be as bright and happy as ever. The connection she was about to form, would be a matter of pride and satisfaction for them all — so much more distinguished and creditable than the one which she had contemplated for herself. *That* had been out of the question for a long time; for Leon Gaylord was dead. He, (Rosco,) believed in special providence, and could now see that he had been aided all through by an overruling Power, in achieving this delightful consummation.

Mrs. Bower was glad, upon the whole, to have the matter settled; for she believed that Bertha would be

happier and more cheerful on account of it. Still, if Leon had only lived, what a world of suffering the poor girl would have escaped! She had heard Bertha say that she regarded herself the same as a widow; and that her mourning for Leon was not yet over, and she doubted if it ever would be while she lived. Still Mrs. Bower believed that the change of marrying Forester, and the pleasurable excitement of the honeymoon, might aid her in overcoming her grief and forgetting Leon Gaylord. And therefore, upon the whole, she was well satisfied with the arrangement. So she conducted the preparations for the wedding with a comparatively light and bounding heart.

Poor Bertha, while striving with all her might to contribute to the joyfulness of the passing days and evenings, was a constant and painful sufferer. While others were rejoicing on her account she was silently grieving in her heart for Leon — mourning rather than rejoicing.

When thus the question was at last settled and Bertha was affianced to Forester, the fact was soon made public. Even before the day was over, all the neighbors and friends in Charming Valley, had heard the tidings and sent them forward.

Some people would say that the public had no business with this affair, whatever — had no right to interest themselves in the subject or to meddle with it, or speculate upon it — that the public had better attend to its own business and not be prying into the private

concerns of individuals and families — that such things only prove the restless and meddling nature of the average American — the idle curiosity and gossiping tendency of the nation. For one, we beg to dissent from this opinion, and to claim that the public had a deep and substantial interest in the subject and had a right to discuss it. All the citizens, old and young, parents and children, loved Bertha dearly, and with reason. She had made herself public property in a certain sense, by dedicating herself to the public service. She had done much, both earnestly and systematically, to benefit and amuse the children of the Valley. They all appreciated her, parents and children, and they had a right to be sensitive upon the question of her marriage, not only on their own account, but also on hers. Should they not be glad of her happiness, and sorry for her misfortune, when she had done so much for them? Not to have taken a lively interest in her marriage, discussing it warmly and speculating upon it, we claim would have indicated a most selfish and ungrateful disposition on the part of the community.

"With such a noble wife, Forester will now be steadier."

"Is it possible that poor Bertha shall thus be sacrificed."

"This is too bad."

"This is a happy day for Forester."

"This is a sad day for Bertha."

"Forester is very wild, but Bertha will make a man of him."

"Bertha will have her hands full."

"He is certainly a very talented young man."

"Charming Valley has lost its charm to-day."

"She is much too good for that wild fellow."

"Ned will now settle down and make a splendid man."

"The Valley will suffer a great loss when Bertha leaves us."

"Well, we cannot expect her to stay with us always."

"Not very soon shall we see her equal in goodness."

"I'm afraid poor Bertha is destined to lead a sad life."

"Edward has not done much to prove his great abilities, yet."

"He must be over five and twenty, and what has he done?"

"Why — don't you remember? He went to college."

"Yes. How long did he stay? Did he graduate?"

"No. They say that was the fault of the Professors."

"There were different stories about that. It was said that while in college, he was concerned in several dark transactions — that two certain students were seen by a little girl to enter the rooms of three certain professors, while those gentlemen were attending to their class duties — that it was directly ascertained that somebody or some *thing* had scattered *Cowhage-down* all through the trunks and drawers and clothing of

those several Professors, that even their beds were filled with that annoying article — that one of those students was Ned Forester, and that it was proven upon him by the clerk of a certain druggist, who had sold him two ounces of *dolichos pruriens*, a few days previous. At any rate, there was so much proof upon the subject that it is said by some that this little piece of amusement positively cost George Forester the trifle of two thousand dollars or so. Ned came home then and never graduated."

"If those are well-attested facts with regard to Edward, I can tell his fortune. Some day, if he lives, he will bring up in a State's-prison."

Such speeches and conversations as these, with many variations upon the all-absorbing topic of the day, spoken in various tones of voice, according to the age, sex, and phrenological "bumps" of the speakers — from the most feminine soprano to the most masculine bass, filled, for a few brief days, the air of Charming Valley.

It is clear that there were various opinions entertained with regard to Edward Forester; but only one as touching Bertha Bower — that of unqualified love and esteem.

CHAPTER XI.

WORSE THAN THE WORST.

THOUGH the sun shines brightly, the morning is dark and dismal in Charming Valley. Another cloud, thick and murky, overshadows the place. Another wave of trouble overflows it. There is no end to poor Bertha's trouble.

Now comes the most painful story of all. Painful indeed and tearful is the story of the bride of Charming Valley. Before even the honeymoon is over—while the echoes of the marriage-bells seem to linger among the pine trees—hush! hush! What is the meaning of this excitement and perturbation? Why this whispering? this stillness? Why this seeming terror?

Dreadful is the rumor and most appalling—the rumor touching Ned Forester.

He is gone and cannot be found! Is he dead?

No—not dead. But he has left the Valley. Left his beautiful bride in sorrow.

Where has he gone? And wherefore?

Merciful heavens! He is charged with crime. Ned Forester is charged with bold, reckless and daring forgery. He has gone where they scarcely hope to trace him.

Again is poor Bertha overwhelmed with grief—agonized and inconsolable! Hopeless is she now—forlorn and wretched indeed.

Other hearts also are stricken and in deep affliction Forester's father and mother, as well as Bertha's parents, are nearly frantic with grief. The whole community is shocked.

Bertha has no comfort or relief but such as universal friendship and heart-felt sympathy can impart. For a long time they seek him—friends, neighbors, officers and parties injured. Anxiously, eagerly and confidently—they seek him throughout the country. Far and wide, through all the country and through the cities they seek him. They seek him faithfully and by various methods. But they seek in vain.

They never find him.

CHAPTER XII.

GOLD, BEAR AND INDIANS.

TIME never tarries nor becomes weary. Onward, still onward, he travels for ever; forward, still forward, but never backward; never resting, never idle; building worlds, framing systems, forming bubbles. All he seeks, all he cares for, is change, variety, motion. Life or death, joy or sorrow, prosperity or adversity — change, universal change — he covets. 'Tis his food, his life, his being. 'Tis himself.

Years had passed away, with all their fluctuations and changes, and Leon Gaylord, still in California, laboring and mining, still delving and trading, had met with great success in everything he had undertaken. Stalwart in body, healthful in constitution, genial in disposition, courageous in spirit, generous of heart, wise and prudent in counsel and prompt in action, he was loved and applauded by all the upright and feared by all the vicious and mean.

Gold flowed in upon him in streams and poured down upon him in showers; in the form of mines, and of all kinds of property; in the form of gold dust, of bullion and of coin.

Many came to him for aid and comfort. Hundreds approached him for friendly counsel. He never turned

his back upon the needy. The poor and needy all blessed and revered him.

In the course of his varied and far-extended schemes among the mountains, mines and fastnesses of California, Leon encountered many dangers and met with many hair-breadth escapes. Some of these escapes could hardly be accounted for otherwise than by the intervention of some invisible protective agency. The indulgent reader will permit us to relate one or two of his adventures.

Leon had acquired an interest in several gold mines, which were located in different gorges and gulches, some of them far remote from others. By virtue of his superior business aptitude, he had become the chief manager of several of these enterprises, by common consent. He made it a point to visit them in person as often as possible. The labor and hazard attending his excursions from one mine to another were often very considerable, and sometimes even terrific.

* * * * * *

One day he was riding his mule upon the side of a mountain, on a new route, which he attempted, first, for the purpose of exploration, and next, to shorten by several miles the traveling distance between two mines. He had proceeded satisfactorily on his way until, as he supposed, he had nearly reached his destination, when suddenly he met with a barrier, in the form of a perpendicular rock, which, perhaps, millions of ages ago,

had been thrown up by one of those subterranean disturbances which have contributed so largely to the magnificent and awe-inspiring scenery of California. It seemed to extend down the mountain, in the same bold manner, far out of sight; and rising skyward, nowhere less than a hundred and in some places more than a thousand feet. Below him the mountain was too steep for even his wonderful and sure-footed mule to attempt. Above him, it was more broken and jagged; but everywhere, within sight, forbidding the idea of a safe passage over or through. Here he tarried for several minutes, surveying and inspecting the rugged obstacle, and consulting with himself as to the proper course to take. At length he turned up the mountain, following the base of the rock — it might have been half a mile or so — when he came to a narrow opening or crevice in the rock. It appeared as if old Vulcan, with one of his heaviest blows, had broken the rock in two; and the ragged and broken sides of the fracture had crumbled away in the course of centuries, and had formed a passage of some three or four feet wide. Leon dismounted, and tied his mule to a sapling near the entrance, in order to explore the passage. As he entered he observed that the ground, consisting chiefly of crumbled and powdered shale, was quite smooth and compacted, as if used by somebody or something for a pathway. He came to the very natural conclusion that it must be an Indian trail. This he considered a fortunate discovery; for the Indians were

friendly, and it assured him a favorable route to the mine which he was seeking. However, it must be admitted that he felt a twinge of nervousness at the moment, as he had no effective arms, except a large pocket revolver and a pocket knife. The revolver was a powerful weapon for its size. It would carry a ball for more than an inch into the hardest wood, if the powder was first quality; and Leon knew now that his powder was superfine. The passage being so narrow and the walls so high, the light was rather dim and scanty, and the passage, upon the whole, rather dreary and uninviting. Leon was seldom intimidated. He traveled along fifteen or twenty rods, and found the footing very good, and every thing quite promising. He was hoping soon to get through, and thought that then he should presently arrive safely at the mine. Just then his ears were shocked by a most terrific growl, very near by, apparently proceeding from some ferocious monster of the wilderness. Peering into the obscurity before him, his eyes were greeted by an immense grisly bear, standing in the passage, or rather advancing towards him, only at a distance of some three or four rods. The bear was approaching him not very swiftly, but very confidently, indeed; as if feeling about sure of one more good dinner. Leon, though not distracted, (he never was), was nevertheless greatly shocked; for he felt now that there was no escape from death. His mind was active for a moment — a short moment — very active, indeed. In that moment he

thought of a great number of things — things very distinct and disconnected. It is astonishing how, like the very lightning, the mind will dispatch business on such occasions, when in terror of present death. This is a mystery, in mental philosophy, which has never been quite explained. Within ten seconds of time Leon's mind evolved many processes of thought, premises, arguments and conclusions. He thought of Bertha Bower, and how she would probably never know, or perhaps care, concerning his fate. He thought of his dear mother, and of her earnest and tearful entreaties that he should not undertake this dangerous enterprise. He thought of Mary, his wife, and of the grief she would suffer on his account. He wondered if it would ever be ascertained by his friends that he had been devoured by a grisly bear.

When the monster was within a dozen or so paces distant, Leon drew his revolver; but felt that his fate was sealed, whatever he might do. For what was his pistol to that thick-hided brute, but a mere pop-gun? It happened, (or was it providential?) that there was a half-round excavation in the rock upon one side of the passage, just at Leon's elbow. With his quick eye — now quicker than ever before in his life — Leon saw this nook, and quick as thought sprang into it and stood upright, with his back firmly against the rocky wall. His form just about filled it; so that his face and the front of his body were about even with the general surface of the rock. He had scarcely more than placed

himself in this position, pistol in hand — having understood from some source or other, that the habit of the bear was to kill its prey principally by the process of hugging, and hoping that this particular bear might find it difficult to get his huge arms around him, in a convenient manner for embracing him, as he stood so snugly in that little niche — when the awful creature came rushing along with a growl, and stopped squarely in front of Leon. Systematically and very deliberately his bearship proceeded to erect himself upon his haunches; and there he stood, or rather sat, face to face with Leon, at a distance from him of two feet or less. The two were about of the same height, Leon being just five feet ten. The bear opened his huge jaws, and was in the act of raising his paws, for the obvious purpose of enacting the climax of the tragedy, when — as sometimes before it has happened in tragedy — there was a sudden mutation of fortune. Man proved superior to beast. Immortal mind triumphed over muscle. As by inspiration, such as that of old, which decided the fate of Goliath of Gath, by a motion twice as quick as the bear's, Leon discharged his revolver and sent a bullet plump into one of the monster's eyes.

That bullet must have been directed by the same will that guided the stone from David's sling. At least *we* believe it. Old Grisly was done for. The ball had entered his brain at exactly the right point. He tumbled over backwards — not upon his face, as

the champion of Philistia fell — but it was just as well; and perhaps better; for had the monster fallen forward, his terrible claws striking Leon upon the head, it might have turned out with our hero as it did with old Samson in his last struggle. In the act of overthrowing his enemy, he might have been crushed to death himself.

Now the bear was dead, and that was enough. Leon's life was saved, and that was sufficient. Probably such a happy result would not follow again in ten thousand such cases, were so many cases possible. (But, then, Leon may have been a cooler-headed marksman than we suppose.) What length of time does the reader imagine transpired between the first growl of the bear, and the pistol shot? Certainly not more than twenty seconds. The animal must have weighed four or five hundred pounds.

When he had finished this job Leon sank upon the ground exhausted, and would have fainted, had he not stretched himself out upon his back. In a few moments he was all right again, and felt as strong as a giant. He now found himself in a dilemma. He was anxious to pursue his journey onward to the mine. But the huge body of the bear lay right in the passage, and nearly occupied it from side to side. The question was, how to get the live mule over the dead bear. Mules are not so affectionate as bears. Or, to use language more accurately, live mules are not as fond of dead bears, as live bears are of dead mules. At first,

he thought of leaving his mule and going to the mine for help, on foot, but was afraid something might happen to the mule in his absence. A thousand dollars worth of gold-dust would not have purchased that mule from Leon. He found a thin stone and a stick which he shaped and sharpened with his knife, and in little over an hour, managed with great effort and toil, to make an excavation in the shaly bottom, as near the bear as possible, large enough to receive the carcass. With a larger stick which he found in the woods, and which he used as a pry, or lever, and with a heap of flat stones as a fulcrum, he made out to tumble the carcass into the cavity which he had dug. When he had buried and well covered it with the shale, he was able to get the mule through, but not without much difficulty. For mules have a keen sense of smell, and they do not fancy the smell of bears. Leon persuaded him, and coaxed him and reasoned with him, enforcing his arguments with a good rawhide; and the mule being very sensible, for a mule, and confiding in his master's friendship and sound judgment, concluded to follow Leon's advice and to go right along and pay no attention to bears. So they got through the passage all right; which proved to be about forty rods long. That is to say, the mountainous rock at this point was about forty rods thick at its base. Then after traveling two or three miles farther, they arrived safely at the mine, about three o'clock, in the afternoon.

The miners were exceedingly excited by Leon's bear story; and some of them said they would be very glad to have a good piece of steak from the carcass. Leon said he had no doubt the steak would be right wholesome, if they fancied that kind, for he was confident that the bear was in a healthy condition. He knew that his teeth were very sound, and that he had no throat disease, having looked as far down his throat as he thought necessary, and seen no signs of ailment there. Then he knew also that the bear had a very sweet breath. He had had a splendid opportunity of testing it. He was confident the bear was healthy, and they could have the steak if they liked.

Finally, three or four of the stoutest miners went back with Leon to the spot, took with them a stone-boat, exhumed the bear and dragged him down by a strong rope, to the mine, where they had a good time over him.

We will try the reader's patience with one more of Leon's hair-breadth escapes.

* * * * * *

He was sitting in a hut one evening after sunfall, surrounded by a group of miners, giving them good advice, and enforcing it with piquant anecdotes and illustrations, when one of the gang outside came to the door of the hut and said there was an Indian out in the gully who wanted to see "Gaylud." Leon directed that he should be treated kindly, and brought up out of the gully; and went out and met him a few

rods from the hut. Several of the miners standing near, kept their eye upon the Indian, not intending that Leon should be taken in any Indian trap.

Leon then spake kindly to him, and asked what he wanted.

Indian. You Gaylud?

Leon. Yes, I am Gaylord. What is *your* name?

Indian. Me Modoc Injun. Me Bigtree. Me friend white man. Me like Gaylud. Me no like bad Injun.

Leon. Well, Bigtree, if you are my friend, give me your hand.

Bigtree. (Giving Leon his hand.) Gaylud smoke peace-pipe with Bigtree?

Leon. Yes, Bigtree, let us smoke together the pipe of Peace.

Leon then led the Indian into the hut, and lighted a pipe of tobacco. Then, smoking three puffs, he handed it to Bigtree, who did the same thing. This ceremony was repeated three times, which made the compact of peace and friendship between them as solemn and binding as possible, according to the Indian custom.

Bigtree. Now me tell Gaylud something. Gaylud come out.

Leon then told the miners that they need have no fear, for the Indian would not betray him. The two walked out, side by side, and sat down upon a big stone together, and talked with each other alone.

Bigtree. Now me tell Gaylud something bad. Two big Injuns shoot Gaylud. Morrow night. Bad Injuns.

Leon. Why do the Indians want to kill me?

Bigtree. Coz Gaylud stop *fire-water.*

It seems that Leon had been very active in trying to check the whiskey traffic, both with the miners and with the Indians. He had made several earnest and very eloquent addresses upon the subject to the miners, and had done what he could to prevent the use of strong drink in every possible way. The Indians had heard of it; and two of the more desperate ones had taken mortal offence, and had sworn to kill him.

Leon. When will the Indians kill me, Bigtree, and how?

Bigtree. Gaylud come home on mule. Morrow sundown. Two big Injuns shoot Gaylud, hind Lunavale rock.

Leon. What shall I do, Bigtree?

Bigtree. Me tell Gaylud now. Me stay here in wigwam. Gaylud take six brave men. Hide six brave men. Two big Injuns come hind Lunavale rock, sundown. Wait for Gaylud. Six brave men shoot two big Injuns.

Leon. But if we shoot these two Indians, then some of the other Indians will come and kill me.

Bigtree. No. Modocs like Gaylud. All right.

Leon. Then the Modocs will kill *you*, Bigtree, when you go back to them.

Bigtree. No. Modocs never know Bigtree tell Gaylud. Bigtree gone Frisco. Come back all right. Modocs never know.

Leon, thus forewarned, took Bigtree into the hut, gave him his supper, treated him kindly, and told him to stay with them as long as he chose. In the evening Leon called a council of war, with the miners. There were sixteen, in all, living in this hut, and working the mine, about two miles distant, down the valley. It was Leon's custom to ride home at sunfall, half an hour in advance of the miners. He now told them of the information which he had received from Bigtree. All, to a man, were willing and eager to join in killing the two Indians, should they come, as Bigtree had predicted. Leon favored a different course. He advised that the two Indians, if possible, be taken alive, as prisoners, and not killed. He said they were not yet guilty of overt murder, and their lives had not been rightfully forfeited. He thought they might be captured alive. "Let every man," said Leon, "take his gun to the mine, well loaded, and in the evening, return two hours in advance of the usual time, as far as Lunavale rock, and there lie in ambush. When the two Indians secrete themselves behind the rock, let the miners rise upon them in a body, and compel them to surrender. Then bring them in well secured with ropes, and have them tried regularly, and disposed of in a civilized way." This course, Leon contended, would be likely to secure immunity from any revengeful attacks thereafter, from the Indians, and also be in accordance with justice.

Then Leon talked with Bigtree, who was anxiously listening to the council.

Leon. Bigtree, if the two big Indians are taken alive, and if they promise to be my friends, will it be safe for me to let them go? Will they kill me after that?

Bigtree. Two big Injuns smoke peace-pipe with Gaylud; then they no kill Gaylud no more. All right.

So the question was settled in the council.

On the following day, all the miners at four o'clock in the afternoon, located themselves near Lunavale rock, and lay, well-armed, behind a thicket of bushes. Sure enough, an hour later, the two Modocs came stealthily, with their guns, and crawled behind the rock. They leaned their weapons against the rock, and sat down upon the ground and waited, evidently intending to murder Leon just as Bigtree had described. Presently, the sixteen miners came rushing down in a solid body, pointing their guns directly towards the two Indians. With a tremendous yell the two Modocs sprang for their guns. They were paralyzed. They trembled from head to foot with deadly consternation. "Down with your guns," cried the Captain of the miners, "and surrender."

The Indians threw their guns upon the ground, expecting of course to be shot dead. The miners followed Leon's direction, to the letter. They bound their prisoners firmly together, pinioned their arms and led them straight to the hut, where Leon was waiting to meet them. The hut was one mile from Lunavale rock.

Leon. Well, Indians, the Great Spirit told me that you were going to shoot me. Why was this? Why did you want to kill me?

Modocs. We no kill Gaylud now. We sorry.

Leon. I'm afraid you will. So now we must shoot *you.* Miners, tie these Indians to the big tree yonder.

The miners led the two Indians to the tree and lashed them to it with a stout rope, closely and firmly. Then leaving them well guarded, all but the guard withdrew into the hut. There, with Bigtree, they held another council of war, which lasted about fifteen minutes. Then Leon directed the miners to go out in a body and discharge their pieces over the heads of the two Indians, and re-load. This was done in good order. Then Leon approached the two Modocs and said:

"Now, Modocs, if I will release you and let you go back, will you smoke the pipe of Peace with me, and be my friends for ever? You see that I could kill you, if I would."

Modocs. We like Gaylud now — we no kill Gaylud. We smoke peace-pipe with Gaylud now, and all white man. We no drink fire-water no more — never.

Then Leon had them unbound, lighted the pipe of Peace, and solemnly smoked it with the two Modocs, in due form. After much gesticulation on their part, indicating perfect good faith, never to be broken, Leon gave them their suppers and restored their guns, and they took their departure. Of course, through all

this, Bigtree was carefully kept out of their sight. Never afterward did Leon have any trouble with the Indians, though he dealt with them extensively. Evermore, too, he boldly and effectually opposed the use of ardent spirits among them.

Leon told Bigtree that for his great goodness of heart towards him, he might ask any favor in Leon's power to grant, and it should not be denied him. Bigtree seemed to appreciate Leon's gratitude; but also seemed to feel that he was still indebted to Leon.

Bigtree. Great Spirit love Gaylud. Gaylud stop fire-water. Bigtree got two braves — two big braves — tall. Fire water fool um — so, (imitating a drunken man.) Me like Gaylud. Gaylud keep braves all right. Sober braves all right. Drunk braves all devil. Now Bigtree gone Frisco. Bigtree fool Modocs. Bigtree stay here eight, nine day. Not go Frisco. Eight, nine day, Bigtree go back.

Leon. Bigtree, you have saved my life. I must be your friend and brother, as long as we live. Whatever you want, Bigtree, come to Gaylord. Come every moon if you can. Gaylord will always be glad to see you, and to help you.

* * * * * *

So Bigtree staid at the miner's hut for about two weeks. Then Leon gave him an ounce of gold dust, and told him to come to him whenever he wanted more. When he departed, Leon embraced him and kissed his brawny cheek.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIFE IN CALIFORNIA.

FOR some years did Mrs. Gaylord receive from her son frequent remittances or drafts for money, timely and ample to supply all her necessities. But never without words of loving kindness and solace — words to cheer and encourage her in the pilgrimage of life.

Promptly and gratefully would she acknowledge these drafts, with such words of anxious interest and of kind and affectionate counsel as the heart of a prudent and loving mother suggested; and with such tidings from home, either good or otherwise, as the hand of Time or the providence of God might furnish.

Noble lives have much in their grain and composition of bitterness and grief — much of wormwood and gall. This is the rule, and Leon Gaylord's life was no exception — life so full of toil and adventure, of excitement and change — life so brave and magnanimous.

Early in the course of his new experience in far-off California he had received tidings of the most shocking and painful nature from Cincinnati — tidings of the death of Mary, his amiable, devoted and loving wife — tidings sent by his mother, in language of the deepest emotion and the most unbounded grief.

Thus had Mrs. Gaylord communicated to Leon the intelligence of this sad event:

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 8TH—

LEON, MY OWN DARLING SON: — The tidings that I have to write you are most sad and dreadful. Mary, my precious daughter, your dear and devoted wife, is dead. Her loving spirit took its heavenward flight this morning, at sunrise. Sweetly and triumphantly did she leave us, showering blessings upon Leon, her dear absent husband, whom she worshiped with a pure heart, next to her God. Suddenly did her life depart — a life of the rarest fragrance and beauty — leaving behind it a flood of grief and desolation. Great indeed is *your* bereavement. But even greater is your mother's. And while she offers you her tenderest sympathy, from a heart dissolved in its own grief, she feels the need of Divine strength herself, to bear the terrible blow. Yet dear Leon, we are not without some consolation and relief. Mary left you a beautiful son; a noble boy, of splendid promise. May the arm of the Infinite God support you under this trial. Your afflicted mother,

ELIZABETH GAYLORD.

When Leon had read this saddest of letters he was struck with consternation, and suffered the most poignant grief. He grieved for his own loss, and also, and quite as bitterly, for the sake of his mother. He thought much of her loneliness, on account of this bereavement; and much, also, of her anxiety with regard to himself, which he felt would now be greatly increased. In the dark day of his grief for the loss of

his wife, the thought that she had left him a promising son lingered in his heart like a ray of joyful light.

As soon as he was able to write, he answered his mother after this fashion:

My Dearest Mother: — Your letter, so tender and so loving, came to my heart like a dagger. I am completely broken down. Her dear spirit was all too pure for this rough and unfriendly world, and she has gone, I trust, to a more congenial clime. Now my precious mother, I feel doubly bereaved. Nay, more than that; for I feel that I share your bereavement also. This weight of sorrow seems almost too much for me to bear. O, darling mother, there is nothing now that I would turn my hand over for, but you. The baby's name — God bless him — must of course be Wilfred. I need not say to you that he will be to me as the very apple of my eye. I pray God you may be blessed in your efforts to raise him, and that he will prove a great blessing to us both, and to many others.

My business here is both prosperous and promising. It enlarges from week to week. If my life is spared, I shall have enough of filthy lucre, no doubt. But I have no heart in it, except as it will enable me to do something for the poor, suffering world, and to make my life a blessing to others. May God's angels guard and protect you, my dearest mother.

Your disconsolate son,

Leon.

Now, with sorrow which only a noble soul can feel, or noble souls appreciate, all labor and business were suspended, and for many days he mourned and wept

bitterly. His stricken heart found relief only in flowing tears. For, after all, Leon's heart was like the heart of a little child for affectionate tenderness. His friends and comrades joined their kindly and sympathizing efforts to relieve his aching agony of soul. In their earnest and rough way did they endeavor to cheer and soothe him. Thus do the huge and rocky projections, in the dreary wilderness, serve to shelter and shield the poor wayfarer till the force of the storm is over.

Sad, sorrowful and lonely, he resumed his labors. His cares multiplied upon him, and time rolled along, assuaging his grief for the loss of Mary. Her image, by degrees, faded from his mind. Like a rare and beautiful vision, it gradually faded from the canvas of his memory. Not so with Bertha's. In spite of his sober reasoning, in spite of his rigid sense of justice and right, in spite of his admirable self-control and iron-like resolution, she was often in his thoughts and in his memory. Often, to his sense and perception, as if in his real ear, her name was clearly pronounced and spoken. The most ordinary sounds floating in the air — notes of the birds, various noises, vagrant and adventitious — seemed to him to pronounce the name with great distinctness, with the most clear and euphonious expression — Bertha! Bertha! In the hush and stillness of the midnight hour he sometimes heard a whisper which startled him; heard, or thought he heard, quite distinctly articulated, just the name of Bertha.

Thus, while he pursued his business, in its various branches, meeting with distinguished success in every enterprise which he touched, thus glided the years and the seasons.

Thus was Leon, living two distinct lives at once, almost as distinct as if he were two separate and distinct personalities. Two men, intimately associating together, opening each to the other his heart from day to day, and perhaps from hour to hour, as to all his thoughts and feelings, would possibly not be as distinct and unlike in their mental operations as Leon was different from Leon in his two characters. In his business life he was frank, fearless and prompt; he was bold, active and persevering; to others he was kind, indulgent and forgiving, but very rigid and exacting with himself. He seemed to the outside world to have no other life but this. His time seemed to be all consumed in his business. For all that, his inner life was far more important to himself — nay, far more important to the world, within the sphere of his influence, than this visible and manifest life of his. It might seem almost incredible, but all through his wonderful experience in California he kept a diary; no half and half concern, such as ninety-nine out of every hundred diaries are; it was no more neglected than his other business. It contained a record of his inner life. Some who have been privileged to examine the MSS. since the close of his California career, have used the most glowing and extravagant language in describing

them. They have not been published, and may never be. Those whose opinions are most reliable, and who know what these MSS. are, affirm that they contain a mine of moral and intellectual treasure, as rich and valuable in their way as any mine in California is rich in its gold.

It is not claimed here, by any means, that Leon Gaylord was the only person who has lived this dual sort of life. On the contrary, such is probably the experience, in some degree or other, of many living persons. In most cases the inner life is dwarfed and subordinate to the outer; whereas, it should be, as it was with Leon, quite the other way.

Not with any idea of display — for we are well aware that others may look with different eyes upon these things — but simply to give samples of his peculiar styles of thought in that rough and trying period of his life, we shall here insert two or three short extracts from his diary, taken at random:

HUCKLEBERRY MINE, SUNDAY, JUNE 17TH—

O, that I could fly away and be at rest! O, that I could lie down with my dear Mary in the grave! But I will not rebel. She came to me from heaven and now heaven has taken her away. Her soul was as pure as the dew and as sweet and lovely as the roses of Paradise. The spirit was upon me and I could not stay. Her voice was like the dulcimer, and her breath, for sweetness, was like the zephyrs of Eden. Yet I was drawn from her by an invisible power — a power as resistless as the waves of ocean. Her love was

like nectar, and the kisses of her lips were like a feast with the fairies. Yet I left her for the dark wilderness. She entwined me with her arms, as soft as chains of lilies interwoven with the fleecy down. She clung to my neck and bathed my brow with her tears. But I tore myself from her embrace. I turned away and left her for ever. I seemed to spurn her from my presence. I know not why it was. To no one else can it seem so strange and mysterious as to myself. I know not what it is that brought me here — what but the inevitable decree of Destiny. This power I cannot see, but I feel it around me — I cannot resist it — an influence that leads and controls my life.

Mary, I did love thee better than I knew. I love thee still, as the dear angel who has preserved me. Your shrine is in my heart and shall never be profaned.

GOBLIN GULCH, SEPTEMBER 11TH —

It is clear that God is in no haste to develop His purposes — if we can judge what His purposes are. Ages after ages are wasted, and but little or no progress, as we estimate progress, is visible. We see innumerable changes, but as often for the worse as for the better. We take for granted that mental growth is the chief end of creation. But how dilatory are the steps by which it takes place! The earliest minds of history — are they not as brilliant and as grand, as noble and as Godlike, to say the very least, as any of the most modern? Compare Moses with Napoleon — Cincinnatus with Washington — Cicero with Webster — Demosthenes with Clay — Job with Kossuth — King David with Goethe — King Solomon with Shakspeare — Socrates with Benjamin Franklin — Confucius with Blackstone — Homer

with Milton. In our impartial judgment, do the moderns excel the ancients in the symmetry and completeness of their minds? From cumulative experience and learning, the moderns have much the advantage; and, *ceteris paribus* ought to be much wiser than the ancients, if they have not actually declined in mental power. According to *our* notions of the Creator, man should be a progressive being. In our self-complacency, we have never questioned the sounndess of these notions. Notwithstanding facts within our limited vista seem to bear hard against it, we must not give up our faith that on a mighty and grand scale — grander than we can compass with our feeble powers — there is a sublime and irresistible movement onward and upward, however slow it may be. The Omnipotent can afford to be slow. Eternity is all His own. Faith, hope and charity only belong to man.

GRISLY BEAR DIGGINGS, SEPTEMBER 20TH, —

"Speech is Silver — Silence is Gold."

But silver is widely useful and beautiful. The world's interpreters of Nature — the Poets, the Orators and the Historians — in the present world, are indispensable. Speech is the silver lever which has lifted the world out of chaos. It is the silver chain which encloses and protects the family, the community and the nation. It is the silver wand which levels the mountain, which converts the forest into a garden, which tames the elements, which subdues the forces of Nature to the service of man. The Homers, the Solomons, the St. Pauls, the Shakspeares and the Newtons, by the silver music of their speech, have charmed the peoples of the world into sympathy of feeling and harmony of action. By the

magical power of this silver weapon, the demon of War must eventually yield his scepter to the Prince of Peace.

What of Silence? In the sweet solitude of the forest, in the sublime presence of the vast mountain, or of the peerless ocean, how puerile, how worthless is speech! How eloquent is Silence! The heavens, spangled with their countless suns, the earth in its orbit, and the sun, with his host of revolving worlds, roll on in eternal silence, infinitely more eloquent than speech. God Himself speaks not with an audible voice. Neither do the angels, nor the spirits of the just made perfect. Speech is for the imperfect, the discordant, the feeble of God's creatures. Speech, indeed is silver — Silence, Gold.

Leon Gaylord was honored wherever he was known. In the explorers' camp, upon the steep Sierras, in the fertile valleys where the pioneer had planted his home, in the great and teeming cities, and in the crowded mines, known and honored was his name. Nothing of a humane and generous nature, nothing for the relief and benefit of the poor and the unfortunate, nothing for general progress and improvement ever failed for want of his assistance. In all such schemes and enterprises his guiding and helping hand was sure to be felt.

Once every week he found time to call together, by friendly invitation, owners, overseers and operatives in the mines, in a social, informal fashion, for the discussion of questions involving the welfare and improvement of all these classes of people; their moral improvement and welfare, as well as their social enjoy-

ment and material prosperity. Self-denying and pious missionaries, of whatever particular creed or Christian name, earnestly joined the work and helped it forward.

So in these, as well as in various other ways, did Leon set in motion — early in the settlement of California — in the Golden era — moral forces for counteracting vice, crime and irreligion.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAGES OF SIN.

ABOUT the middle of the century, during the youthful days of San Francisco, a leading mind — leading always in the right direction — towering above all others in his philanthropic schemes and unselfish ambitions, bringing order out of chaos, driving into exile the evil spirits of disorder and lawlessness, setting in motion all the wheels of improvement and progress, which by the blessing of God have been kept in motion to the present hour, was the mind of Leon Gaylord.

The people were quick to discover his transcendent worth. Soon his public spirit, his lofty and invincible genius, his ready, correct, far-seeing judgment, and his royal wealth of resources, were brought to their appreciative comprehension — in many practical and unmistakable ways. He seemed just the spirit that was needed. His happy, hopeful disposition, his even temper, his commanding presence and his remarkable executive ability, were recognized as by acclamation, as being furnished and prepared for the occasion, by an ovĕrruling Power. He seemed as one sent of heaven to rule and judge the people.

Early and promptly was he called to the highest

positions of honor and responsibility. He was chosen as chief Magistrate and Judge of the largest mining district of California, including Sacramento, and all the counties east and north of it. He was not only the most important officer in the district, but so wielded his authority as to render himself the most popular.

While in this capacity, many were the ill-conditioned cases that came before him for adjustment. Many were the wicked schemes and machinations that found their quietus through his decision. Fraudful tricks and faithless dealings came to early grief and condign punishment by his decision.

Thus, for years, he stood prominent as a bulwark for the cause of humanity and justice. To all conspirators and all evil doers he stood as a rock of terror. To the righteous man — to the man of pure and honest heart — he stood as a tower of defence, of kindness and of protection. To the unfortunate and the poor, the forsaken and the outcast, he stood as a refuge and shelter.

Leon, though still carrying on many large business enterprises, in connection with other men, was now occupied much of his time upon the Bench. For the country was rapidly filling up with the most heterogeneous and unmanageable community that was ever drawn together from the four quarters of the globe. Though the technicalities of the law were generally disregarded in the Courts, much precious time being thereby saved, yet, especially in Leon's department, it is very doubtful whether substantial justice, as sure, as

prompt and as uniform, would have prevailed under the hair-splitting methods of the lawyers, as by these rough-and-ready, common-sense methods. They certainly would not have been as cheap nor as summary, and perhaps not as effectual. The speed and certainty with which the sentence of the Court was executed, had a salutary influence in preventing crime and rascality; an influence which would not have been realized under the dilatory system which prevails in the older communities.

It may possibly be a question fit for the consideration of statesmen, whether the refined and complex processes of modern jurisprudence are not attended with greater evils in their vast expensiveness and lumbering tardiness, than these ancient, more simple and expeditious methods of arriving at the finalities of justice.

In cases of capital crime there was a law of the territory forbidding all executions until the signature of the Chief Judge was procured, approving the sentence. In that early day it was necessary that for certain offences the penalty should be very severe. There were so many opportunities and facilities for committing these offences, and there were such large numbers of vagrant and desperate characters, floating up and down the valleys, dodging about the rocks and canyons, and disappearing in the mountain fastnesses, it would have been quite impossible to maintain any degree of order or of safety to life and property, with-

out the severest laws and the most vigorous and effective administration and police. It was soon found — under this severe and summary penal system — especially when the forfeiture of life was the penalty — and this was necessarily the case with regard to a large list of crimes — that some means was requisite in many instances to check the hasty action of the excited and exasperated populace. This was the method adopted. As already mentioned, it was, in every instance where the penalty was death, an unconditional rule of law, that could not be violated without incurring the charge of murder, that the Chief Magistrate should sign the death warrant before its execution. Whenever any question arose in his mind with regard to the justice of the sentence, in the Lower Court, he could have the case reviewed in his own Court; or he could send it back, or could send it to some other Court, for a new trial.

The primary courts of California of that period were sometimes rather loosely constructed, and of very shabby material.

It is not now recollected that any other instance occurs in the history of civilized nations, in which a man has been placed upon the Bench, as Chief Magistrate, at the age of twenty-two. When it is understood that Leon Gaylord held this responsible position for a long time — until he voluntarily resigned it, against the unanimous voice of the Commonwealth, — it can scarcely be doubted that his talents and abilities,

for a man not educated in the law, must have been extraordinary.

For the better accommodation of the public, Judge Gaylord held his courts in several different localities, widely apart. His residence and principal or Central Court was at Sacramento.

* * * * * *

One morning he was sitting in the Court room in Sacramento, examining the proceedings of the Lower Courts, when, looking out of the window, he saw a crowd of at least a hundred men, rushing along as if under great excitement. As they approached the building he observed in the midst of the crowd a couple of young men bound with ropes and hand-cuffs. With much clamor and commotion the crowd halted in front of the open Court-house door; when two stalwart men from the body of the crowd, bearing an open document and a very consequential air, came in. The document was the death-warrant of the two young men. They had been tried, it seems, by a justice-of-the-peace some four miles up the Valley, convicted and sentenced to be hanged. The charge upon which they had been tried was the stealing of a mule. They were Indians of the Modoc tribe. Leon took the document and looked it carefully over, while the turbulent, blood-thirsty crowd were waiting impatiently for the Judge's signature, intending to make short work of the Indians as soon as the legal sanction of the Court had been obtained. The paper appeared to be all regular

and properly executed; with the record of the trial, and the signature of the officiating Justice, all in due form.

Judge Gaylord ordered the two prisoners to be brought into his presence. He learned from the document that their names were — Longbone and Shortbone. They were fine, good-looking fellows, and resembled each other so nearly that they seemed to him to be brothers, and perhaps twins. From their appearance he thought their age might be about twenty years each. Leon inquired of the two constables who brought in the document, if the witnesses against the prisoners were in the crowd. He was told that they were. He ordered them to be brought in. The constables went out and brought back with them two extremely vicious looking fellows, who seemed to be taken quite aback and not a little confused. "Is it upon your testimony," said the Judge, "that these two lads have been convicted of theft?" They said it was. Judge Gaylord then directed the constables to take one of these witnesses outside, keeping him in charge, and leaving the other in Court. When this was done he had the witness placed upon the stand and sworn. He then requested him to go on frankly and state what he knew about all the particulars of the theft.

The witness commenced by stating that he had found his mule in possession of these two Indians. "I asked these fellers," said he, "where they got it, and

they told me how that they found it loose on the mountain, and were trying for to find the owner on it. I thought that they was lyin', and that they had took it outen the paster field. So I found out arfterwards by Dick Fugleman, how that I was right about it, and that he had seen these two fellers take it outen the lot one night, jest ezactly as I thought."

Leon. Did the mule belong to you?

Witness. Of course it did.

Leon. When and of whom did you buy him, and what did you pay for him? (The witness haggled his answers badly.)

Witness. Well now, I bought it about two month ago of the tother witness. I think I gin him about six ounces o' dust.

Leon. Is the other witness any relation of yours? and where does he live?

Witness. He haint no relation to me, I reckon; I never see him afore last Spring. His house is the next one to mine.

Leon. When was the mule stolen?

Witness. Six weeks ago last Sunday night.

Leon. Then you had him about two weeks.

Witness. Yes. I reckon I had it jest about two weeks.

Leon. What is your occupation?

Witness. I'm nothin sir, but — but — a *vegible* farmer, sir.

Leon now ordered that this witness should be taken

out, and the other brought in, without their seeing each other. This also was done; and after the oath was administered to the second witness, the Court thus examined him.

"What is your name?"

Witness. They call me Dick Fugleman, but that haint my honest name. My honest name is Richard Styphler.

Leon. Where do you live?

Witness. I live with Loot Larkey, the other man that was in here.

Leon. Is he a relative of yours?

Witness. Nothin' but my own cousin.

Leon. What do you know about the stealing of the mule?

Witness. I seen the two Injuns take that mule outen the paster field, one night about ten o'clock.

Leon. Are you sure it was these two young men who did it?

Witness. Yes, now I reckon I'm dead sure o' that.

Leon. Why did you not stop them, and make an alarm?

Witness. I hadn't time 'fore they got away. Besides that I was afeerd on 'em.

Leon. When was the mule stolen?

Witness. Two weeks ago last Sunday night.

Leon. When did you tell your cousin that they had stolen his mule?

Witness. I told him on it the next mornin' when I

first seen him. And he said how that them Injuns orter be killed.

Leon. How far were you from the Indians when you saw them take the mule?

Witness. Well now I reckon it was about ten rod or so.

Leon. How could you know them in the dark, so far off?

Witness. Couldn't a man see ten rod by bright moonlight? But then I reckon it warnt quite ten rod.

[Here Leon examined the almanac, and found that the moon was on change at the date of the alleged stealing, no matter which of the two dates named by the two witnesses was accepted. So she could not have been shining much in that part of the Solar system on either of these dates.]

Leon. Where did your cousin get the mule?

Witness. He said how he traded for him, with a stranger.

Leon. Did you ever own the mule yourself?

Witness. Not much. I reckon as how I never owned any mule.

Leon. What is your cousin's business?

Witness. Well he keeps a kind o' entertainment house.

Leon. Is that all the business he has?

Witness. That's the ony kind that I know on.

Leon. How long have you known your cousin?

Witness. Well, we 've been acquainted all along

sens we was boys. But then I haint lived with 'im on'y six month or so.

Leon. How long has your cousin owned the mule?

Witness. I don't know. He had it w'en I come to live there.

Leon then ordered the first witness to be brought in again. When this was done, he had them both arrested and well secured with ropes. Then he turned to the two prisoners.

Leon. Boys, what are your names?

Longbone. Me Longbone — he Shortbone.

Leon. Are you brothers?

Longbone. Yes. We brother-twins.

Leon. Did you steal the mule?

Longbone. We no steal mule. We find mule on mountain. We find him all loose.

Leon. What were you going to do with the mule?

Longbone. We look up owner.

Leon. What is your father's name?

Longbone. Bigtree.

Leon. Where is your father now?

Longbone. Don't know.

Strangely enough, just at this moment who should enter the Court-room but Bigtree himself, all out of breath and pale with excitement. When he saw his two boys alive and sitting there bound, he fell down headlong and fainted away. There was now a very exciting scene all around. The crowd outside was informed by the constables that the two witnesses had

been convicted by the Judge, of the grossest perjury out of their own mouths, and that the two Indian lads were entirely innocent of the crime.

Bigtree, when he came to himself, was full of downright gratitude. When his boys were unbound and set free, he was well-nigh frantic with joy. He kissed Leon all over — his hands, his legs and even his feet. When he led his sons out of the Court-room the crowd met him with shouts of congratulation; and he and his boys marched about like heroes after a great victory.

The result was that the witnesses, Dick Fugleman and Loot Larkey, had a formal trial the next day, when it was proven that these desperadoes had formed a conspiracy against the lives of the two young Modocs and their father, Bigtree. The reason was that these Indians had been active in keeping their tribe away from the drinking den of the conspirators. Larkey had never owned the mule in his life. But learning that these Modoc boys had found a mule in the mountains, they framed the conspiracy for the purpose of securing the mule and getting rid of the Bigtree family at one stroke. They were both convicted, confessed their crime, and were promptly executed.

Next to Bigtree, Judge Gaylord was overjoyed to find that the twin braves were innocent. Had he found these boys guilty — the sons of his friend — the friend who had formerly been the means of saving his life — it is impossible to conceive the agony of mind the discovery would have caused him. As it was, few

scenes of his eventful life were fraught with deeper or more heartfelt satisfaction than this.

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Who is this they have brought into Court and stands up before Judge Gaylord — so ragged and bloated — so wan and haggard? He is charged with a despicable crime. He seems tremulous and nervous; scarcely able to stand, from sheer exhaustion — or, perhaps, from sudden illness.

When duly arraigned, the Court thus addressed him:

Who are you, prisoner? Why are you here? What is your name? Have you any occupation, and what is it? What is the history of your former life? Have you any means of living? Have you a home, or where is your dwelling-place?

"Name?" replied the prisoner. "My name is Legion. Known am I through the mountains and the mines, as *Slippery Ned.* Occupation? I have none, whatever. Home or abiding-place? For years, I have been a wanderer, without object or aim. History? That is long and weary. Homeless am I and without friends or money. Utterly destitute am I, foodless, bedless and sick. And life has become a painful burden to me."

As the eyes of Judge Gaylord were intently fixed upon him, he turned pale, and seemed to be sinking down and fainting. Quickly and in the most gentle and humane spirit, Leon ordered help and had him taken to a house of rest and quiet; where he was

kindly treated and had all necessary aid and care — physician, medicine, food and attendance.

Upon the following day, Leon called upon the prisoner, personally. He was not surprised to find him upon the bed, in a low fever. With a quick eye, he saw that the patient's constitution was thoroughly broken and wrecked — saw that his case was simply desperate — almost certain to be fatal. For some undefined reason, Leon seemed to feel, in this wreck of humanity, an unusual degree of interest. Leon himself could not exactly tell what it arose from. But no doubt, it was occasioned by the traces of intelligence and refinement which the man exhibited. For he certainly betrayed, both in his speech and manners, abundant evidence of superior talent and education.

Faithfully, circumstantially, and in well chosen language, with great self-command, yet not without occasional emotion, did the prisoner recite his story, while his strength was barely sufficient for the task.

Thus was it related, and by Leon thus recorded:

"Of home and family I prefer not to speak with particularity. I cannot endure the thought that my mother should ever be brought to the knowledge of my sufferings and misfortunes — that she should ever know of my sins and of the wages they have brought. Rather let my name be covered with darkness — with silence, darkness and oblivion. I frankly confess, I have been a reckless villain, and that without excuse.

"From a child I was reared in wealth and luxury.

Liberally educated, I was a favorite with my teachers and classmates, until, by misconduct, I forfeited their respect. By some I was praised; by others, envied. Wild, prodigal, and extravagant, never was I curbed, checked, nor bridled. Never did my father presume to cross my wishes. Never did my mother fail to flatter and caress me.

"When, in process of time, my heart was smitten by a maiden, as pure and lovely as an angel — beautiful, brilliant and lovely beyond comparison — thought I, now surely she will be only too glad, only too proud, only too eager to accept me. When I found that she already had a true-love — poor, undistinguished and far away — I thought surely he will prove to be nothing; nothing but the merest trifle in my way; nothing to obstruct my progress — my triumphal progress — to the goal of my ambition. When, for months I had plied my love-suit — by means of all my arts, my friends and my money, but still unsuccessfully — then did I, with the heart of a devil incarnate, form in my mind the purpose and resolution, to win her by means and measures most desperate — means the most cruel and unscrupulous, and measures the most cowardly and devilish. Now, if my heart were not callous and my conscience were not seared, even this rehearsal would choke my utterance.

"From the home of her faithful and accepted lover, in a western city far beyond the mountains, with Satanic shrewdness, I wrote, under the false name of

a friendly neighbor — wrote to the maiden's father, just before the time appointed for their nuptials — that the young man was dead and buried. Falsely did I write these heart-rending and cruel tidings.

"Overwhelmed with anguish and grief, the maiden fell into a frightful and raging fever. Long was her life suspended in the balance. For many days did her case seem hopeless. When, at length, the force of youthful vigor brought her through the crisis of the fever, she rose from her bed a wild maniac; weeping, laughing, raving and screaming, talking wildly, and walking with her lover, that to her sane understanding, had died and was buried.

"To him I had also written — to her lover beyond the mountains, in the city of the Far West — like a desperate coward and villain, cruelly, falsely and wickedly had I written, over the forged signature of the maiden's father, that his lady-love had changed her mind, and was married to another — to a wealthy merchant of the city. What was his subsequent fortune or fate — fortune of the disappointed lover — never did I hear or know; nor did I care.

"For weeks and even months, she rambled about through the fields and pine woods, seeking the most solitary places; talking with Nature; sometimes laughing and weeping with terrible emotion; holding converse with the disembodied spirit of her lost lover. While I was anxiously watching, breathless and trembling — watching and waiting for the final result

—fear and withering suspense tormented me by day, and dark misgivings and forebodings, shuddering dread, terror and remorse, stole my nightly sleep and gnawed my heart-strings.

"At last her mind was restored. Reason was finally triumphant. Nature's medicine was efficacious. The beautiful girl, by degrees, returned to health with all her sweetness, soul-light and sparkling brilliancy. Her eyes were as overpowering, her voice was as touchingly melodious, her features as radiant and irresistible, her carriage as graceful and sylph-like as ever. But in spirit she was sad and sorrowing.

"Then did my heart recover, and regain its former vigor. My face resumed its former cheerfulness and sunshine. With fresh courage I again sought the maiden's favor—again brought my love-suit and urged it with renewed energy and determination.

"Thus widowed in mind and feeling; widowed in the prime and flush of youth, and through the guilty conduct of a despicable coward and miscreant, she, this guileless and unsuspecting maiden, from pure sympathy of heart—not the sympathy of love and affection, but of mere friendship and pity—while she had known of my frightful sorrow, but never divining its real cause—accepting it, in her noble and pure mind, as the effect of earnest, yearning love—she gave her heart, or rather, gave the remaining fragments of it—gave her heart and hand in marriage to this vile and miserable outcast—this unworthy wretch, who now lies before you in the grip of Death.

"'My heart is broken,' said she, 'broken all in pieces. All the best part of it has gone to heaven. My first lover has gone and has taken it with him. What is left of it, Edward, is scarcely worth possessing. But whatever remains of its *debris* I now present you. It is poor and worthless, indeed, but all I have to give you.'

"'To me,' said I, 'it is neither worthless nor poor, but most precious and invaluable. I will freely give you for it all my fortune and my life. For these remnants, which you call poor and worthless, will I love, cherish and bless you until death shall separate us.'

"I had been materially aided in the guilty business of capturing this beautiful and bereaved girl by the sordid and avaricious disposition of her father, whom she loved devotedly. Believing me prospectively the heir of considerable wealth, he had labored, zealously and without much scruple, to bestow the hand of his idolized daughter upon me. Through his artful and sinister management, and his blind devotion to Mammon, he had accomplished, unsuspectedly, the removal and virtual banishment to the far West of the young man who afterwards proved my formidable rival. Encouragement from such a source, by word, by action and by every kind of influence, was, without any doubt, the weight which, more than any other, finally decided the question.

"Never was there a more glorious day than that of our espousals. The town was all in a most delightful commotion. Every body, both old and young — but

principally for *her* sake — was proud and happy to do us honor.

"Such a bride for beauty and every charming grace — such a bride for truth and all the Christian virtues — such a bride for all excellence and perfection, so free from guile and all selfish plottings, so pure and white in all the texture of heart, soul and spirit — surely there can never be another.

"When the brilliant day was over — day of our marriage — when the scene, so glorious and distinguished, had passed for ever away — darkness came over me like a tidal billow; thick, suffocating darkness. It came rushing over my soul and spirit with the most stifling effect. There came with it, also, a new vision. A new sight was given me. Then I saw, in glaring and painful colors, what foul and egregious wrongs I had perpetrated. Eagle-eyed Nemesis came swooping down upon me like a fierce and hungry vulture. Such a crushing weight of guilt was on me — such a frightful picture rose up before me — such a hideous, glaring and ghastly record rose up in my memory, glaring upon my very soul, vexing and torturing my conscience, that my suffering seemed greater than I could bear; and I strove to escape it by every possible device. Daily and nightly I struggled, but all in vain. Wherever I turned the baleful picture was still before me. If I closed my eyes it was there just the same. I realized and felt its presence. It seemed to become alive and all malignant. It had a hundred scorching

eyes staring at me. It had dreadful instruments of torture, whetting and brandishing them before me; scowling frightfully, and assuming the most threatening attitudes. It was full of teeth and tusks and claws, ready to spring upon me. At last my resolution failed me. Then, in a state of desperation, reckless, horrified and frantic, feeling myself to be hopelessly ruined and lost, in a paroxysm of despair, with impulsive haste, I forged and uttered a draft and drew the money upon it. Then, leaving for ever my home and peerless bride, relinquishing all my favorite schemes, my towering hopes and flattering prospects, I flew to the seaboard, and shipped on an ocean sailer for the port of San Francisco. Swiftly wafted by the winds and rolling billows, through the never-resting waters, better far had I sunk beneath them. Far better were the world without me.

"For a long and dreadful time have I been roving here in California; restlessly shifting, continually dodging, drinking and gambling, a vagabond, without friends, without hope, without an object; often and under various names arrested, constantly striving to avoid recognition, to elude discovery and to escape apprehension; here at length my miserable career terminates. Now is my wretched life rounded with crime and finished. I have but one more breath. My name is Edward Forester, and I am guilty."

Now was the prisoner's voice silent, and for ever. Never another word he uttered. All at once ceased his speaking and his life.

CHAPTER XV.

A VISION.

WITH profound emotions, Leon had listened to the prisoner's strange recital. Whatever might have been the cause of these emotions, they certainly did not spring from any thought or suspicion that his own Bertha was the heroine of the story. It would have been asking too much of a well-regulated and practical mind, like Leon's, to entertain such a superstitious idea, involving so many improbable coincidences. Still, it must be confessed that he had exhibited a very exceptional degree of interest in the dying man's story. There was a strange, magnetic influence — a fascination altogether mysterious — which had held him rapt in the closest attention; in abstracted, silent and eager thought.

Not dreaming of the prisoner's so sudden taking off, Leon's mind had been filled with questions which he had intended to ask him at the close of his recital — questions which would probably have led to something of unusual concern to himself — questions in which even California might well have taken an interest.

But the Court was for ever closed in this case. *Sine die* and abruptly was the inquest adjourned. Suddenly and unexpectedly had the parties rested. The direct

examination was closed; cross-questioning was now forever impossible. The prisoner was "in contempt," and in contempt must forever remain. No judge on earth could reach him. To the Court beyond the river — the court of last resort — the great Court of Appeals, was the case removed for final adjudication, for final arraignment and trial.

With such sacred service as is due, in all Christian lands, to the burial of the dead, Leon, in a public manner, solemnized the prisoner's obsequies. He went even farther, and caused a headstone to be erected by the grave — very simple and plain, of course — with the name of *Edward Forester* engraved upon it in deep and enduring characters.

* * * * * *

All the remainder of the day and evening Leon's mind was pre-occupied and deeply lost in meditation — abstracted in thought and indisposed to conversation. At night his sleep was strangely — nay, marvellously — disturbed by dreams. Round about him every thing seemed forlorn. There was a dismal, lurid light gleaming down upon him, serving to render the darkness visible — the melancholy darkness and gloom in which he seemed enveloped. Whichever way he turned there was darkness or lurid twilight. Glittering upon the ground, here and there, was an abundance of gold — gold lying carelessly upon the ground. It seemed to Leon as poor and valueless as the stones of the pavement. There were also half-distinguishable faces passing by him; some apparently smiling, some gloomily

frowning; passing swiftly before him, glaring in his eyes. But he traveled forward in solitude, with a feeling of intense loneliness, anxious, unsatisfied and wretched. Still, he was pressing on, but knew not whither. Thus he proceeded for a long time, sometimes halting and listening. At length he caught in his ear the sound of a human voice — gentle and low, but very sweet and winning. Verily, it seemed to him like the whisper of an angel. Soon, as he continued listening, it seemed most strangely the voice of his mother. Thus, in silvery accents, it spake:

"Why lookest thou downward, my son? Why should'st thou ever be looking downward upon the earth? be ever peering in the darkness? Look far away. Look towards the heavens. Turn thy eyes to the Orient!"

Startled, and wondering at his own thoughtlessness, he quickly lifted his eyes toward the Eastern heavens; and far in the distance — all too far — he beheld a form of loveliness which transfixed him with admiration and amazement. It was a form of perfectly defined light, of lustrous brilliancy and pearly softness — its shades and colors blended so voluptuously, with such perfection of harmony, so subduing and delightful, so dissolvingly enrapturing to the eye, arranged and combined with such wondrous, such mysterious art — a form so deliciously ravishing and bewildering in its strange, celestial beauty — that his soul was completely overpowered and captivated. There it stood in its sublimity — a simple column. Upright it stood against

the orient heavens — against the dark, starless and frowning heavens — in all its parts, its symmetries and proportions, with simply its base, its shaft and its capital — nought else but these — yet was its figure so transcendently beautiful and so superlatively graceful, and its features, each by each, so divinely fair and radiant, as well as so resplendently glorious in *ensemble*, that he stood before it in rapturous astonishment.

Then, again, spake distinctly the same gentle voice, in the same tone as before: "Dearest Leon, keep me in thy heart — for I am thine, and thine forever."

Then there was profound stillness. As he stood gazing at the column, as it were fascinated, a cloud rose up before it, and, covering it as with a veil, obscured it to his sight. Then the lovely object could no longer be seen in its full splendor and majesty. Next a huge fiery serpent, daintily displaying the most gorgeous and enchanting hues, as in graceful convolutions he approached the column, reared his glittering head and slowly coiled around it. Soon the thing of such ineffable beauty, by its own inherent purity and loveliness, repelled the monster from its presence with precipitant haste, so that he recoiled and shrunk away, and was seen no more. The beautiful vision was lost in a cloud.

Now, Leon, in a paroxysm of emotion, shouted aloud in the midst of his dream. Then, instantly awakening, he found himself, but lost his curious and delightful vision.

CHAPTER XVI.

MURDER AND PUNISHMENT.

THERE was a suit brought in Judge Gaylord's Court, entitled "Forbes against Durfee." It seems that Forbes had been working a mine in Eldorado County which proved to be very profitable. In the course of two months he had taken out over fifty thousand dollars. The rainy season coming on, he had been obliged to suspend operations for a few days, not supposing there was any danger of losing his property by so doing. He intended to return, with his miners, and resume operations just as soon as it would be safe and profitable to do so.

There was one Durfee, an adventurer from Mississippi, who had coveted this mine, and had tried, from the very beginning, to induce Forbes to let him in, as some kind of a partner. Forbes not fancying the man, had positively and persistently refused to do this, on any terms whatever. So Durfee had finally given it up and subsided. But when Forbes was away for a few days on account of the unfavorable weather, what should this Durfee do but take on a gang of desperate fellows, as operatives, and assume possession of the mine, just as though it rightfully belonged to him. Now the rule, in those early days, which however has

been modified since, was like this. Any mine that was given up and deserted by its owner, for a period of time, and under circumstances which indicated its absolute abandonment, might be taken up and operated by any one soever who should choose to do it — and might be held as against any claim that should be brought thereafter, founded simply upon prior possession. But an abandonment on account of the weather, which was intended to be only temporary, gave no man or number of men any shadow of right to enter upon the property. Now a day or two after Durfee had surreptitiously taken possession of the mine, Forbes, in accordance with his first intention, not knowing what Durfee had been doing, came on again with his men, to resume work; when he was confronted by Durfee and his formidable gang of ruffians. Forbes, greatly surprised and provoked, demanded possession, explained, reasoned and remonstrated. Durfee had anticipated all this, and paid but little attention to him; affected to make light of his claim, and refused to yield a single inch; swearing that any man who should undertake to disturb him in his business, would be carried away a corpse. Forbes, who was a resolute and sensible man, from St Louis, turned away and started for Sacramento, for legal assistance. Of course, he was advised to bring an action in ejectment against Durfee; and that without delay. So the suit was at once commenced in Leon's Court. Legal proceedings in this Court were not apt to be "long drawn out."

In less than three days after Forbes' demand upon Durfee, the case had been brought and tried, and Forbes had been awarded the ownership of the mine, and the sheriff had been ordered to deliver him the possession of it, and the sheriff, knowing something of Durfee's desperate character, had summoned a posse of fifty men, well armed, and had proceeded with Forbes to the mine, whence Durfee, though fiercely resisting, had finally been thoroughly ejected, and several men had been seriously wounded, and poor Forbes had been shot dead by Durfee, and all this within three days' time. The Sheriff took possession of the property in the name of the Court; but it made no difference with poor Forbes, Durfee had murdered him.

In the excitement and confusion that followed the struggle, the murderer made his escape to the mountain; and the Court held possession of the property, in behalf of Forbes' heirs, if any should make their appearance. The whole affair was published in the Sacramento papers, immediately.

There was a Coroner's inquest held over the body of Forbes, and the verdict was in accordance with the facts. What did that avail? Forbes was dead; and having no relatives in the territory, the transaction, not being a very singular one for the times and the place, was soon forgotten by the public, and the murderer roamed at large with impunity.

The shooting of a man in California, in those days, was hardly of as much consequence as the stealing of a mule.

Forbes had been a young man of property, and of first rate standing, in St Louis. He was twenty-six years of age, and was affianced to a young lady in that city, whither he had intended to return, after acquiring a fortune, to claim her as his bride, and then to settle down in life. Her name was Gertrude Finney. Though her father was in reduced circumstances, she was well educated, and a girl of decided character. About five feet six in height, and firmly moulded, accustomed to physical exercise, the very image of health, she was full of spirit and courage. With a broad and lofty brow, large, provoking blue eyes, very fine, speaking features, and a sanguine-nervous temperament, her brain played with the harmony and effectiveness of perfect machinery — not the machinery of some frivolous toy, however ingenious, but of some grand locomotive, ready to scale mountains, or of some noble steamer of the ocean, capable of walking the water "like a thing of life."

The news of Hamilton Forbes' murder, with the circumstances attending it, and the escape of Durfee, was received in St Louis, across the Plains, in less than a month after the crime was committed. It fell upon Gertrude Finney with great severity. Instead of prostrating and crushing her, it served to wake up the volcanic fires of her nature, and swell them into frightful eruption. In less than an hour after the first dreadful agony was over, her resolution had been taken. Her mind flashed like distant lightning to the eye — silently

and instantaneously. There would be many and grave difficulties to overcome. This she was well aware of. But she determined, then and there, "come weal, come woe," that nothing should be insurmountable to her, in avenging the murder of her devoted lover — nothing whatever, short of death itself. She lost no time. Without revealing her purpose to any of her relatives, she started out to raise money for a private expedition to California, and was successful. In less than twenty-four hours she had found a young man of large wealth and a poetic imagination, who sympathized with her to that degree, or was so far overcome by her pleading personal charms, that he lent her, at his own risk, the sum of a thousand dollars. Promising faithfully to repay him, she made no delay, but hastened, secretly, to procure an outfit. This consisted of a male wardrobe, throughout, ample and complete, two revolvers of the most approved pattern, and a trunk filled with these and all manner of necessaries. She engaged her passage with the next public expedition, to Sacramento Valley. Telling her mother that she was going to be absent for a few weeks to visit some friends out of the city, the very next Monday morning after she had received tidings of the murder, she was pushing her way across the Plains for California, in company with about twenty stalwart men, of various ages — no one suspecting her sex — with three wagons drawn by six mules, and one extra horse with saddle and bridle. After many hardships, of course, she arrived safe and

well at Sacramento — having been on the passage thirty-two days — except that she had a sprained ankle, and was very much fatigued. She was known among her comrades on the route, as "the handsome boy."

She found rooms at a quiet boarding house; and every day, went about the place to learn the customs of the people. She inquired, in a way not to excite attention, what had become of the man Durfee, who had murdered Forbes. She was informed that he was at large, somewhere about the Valley, with no regular business, and no particular abiding place. What could she do without a pony? Nothing. So she looked for such an animal, well-equipped; and found and purchased one that just pleased her. He was well trained and as spry as a deer. Thus fitted out, after she had become thoroughly recuperated from the fatigue of her long journey, and after her ankle had completely recovered, she mounted her pony and started up the Valley. She had but one object — one thought — one purpose — namely, to shoot Durfee, the murderer, upon sight. She recked nothing concerning herself, after she should achieve the grand object of her mission. She was as bold as a lion, as timid as a fawn, as cunning as a fox, and as nimble as an eel. She passed as a young man who was prospecting. She talked with various persons that she met, inquiring about business opportunities and about the country — the mountains, the valleys and the mines. She had obtained a minute personal description of Durfee, at Sacramento — of his general

appearance and his dress. So she could not well mistake him, if once she could only get her eye upon him. She never mentioned Durfee's name in her travels about the Valley, but rode from one place to another, from one mine to another, talking and inquiring about every thing else in the world, but Durfee. In this way she spent several days, returning each night to her boarding house in Sacramento.

At length, in riding up the Valley one morning, she fell in with a man on horseback, whom she at once recognized, as the object of her search. She saluted him carelessly, in the usual way; and they rode on together, and soon got into a lively conversation. She appeared very unsophisticated, yet Durfee found her extremely entertaining. Nor was it long before he unbent himself to her, and was very communicative. He gave her a history of his California adventures, and among other things, he told her, in a kind of boastful, self-glorifying tone, how he had once shot and killed a man, who had crossed his purposes — she may have heard of it — but that was the only man he had ever killed, and he should never kill another. He wondered what had become of the fellow's sweetheart, one Gertrude Finney, of whom he had heard him speak so often. Gertrude seemed admiringly and flatteringly interested in his story, and smilingly asked if this act had ever disturbed his sleep. He said it had for a few nights, at the time, but that it did not now any more. She asked him why he had done it, and he said he was

bound not to be beaten by a Missourian. He showed her the very revolver with which he had done the deed. She smiled and reached out her hand, as they rode along, side by side, as though she would like to examine the weapon. Without the least hesitancy, he let her take it; she inquiring, timidly, if it was loaded.

"Of course," said Durfee, "you don't suppose I would ever have the thing about me *un*loaded!"

She looked it over carefully, examining the lock and seeing that it was well capped. Suddenly halting her pony, said she:

"You murdered my lover, sir; I am Gertrude Finney." At once she fired at him with his own pistol; sending a ball through his chest.

The murderer threw up his arms, and fell from his horse, upon the ground.

"You have done right," said he, "in killing me." Then, with one long expiration, he closed his eyes in death.

She threw his pistol down by his side, and wheeled her pony about, and rode back to Sacramento as quickly as possible. No one living had witnessed the act but herself. Thus the weapon with which he had murdered Forbes had brought death to Durfee also.

She rode directly to the Court house, where Judge Gaylord was just then holding a Court; dismounted, fastened her pony, and went in. Without stopping any where until she reached the bar, she thus addressed the Court:

"Will your Honor allow me to interrupt you a moment? I wish to be arrested. I have just now killed a man."

"Where and who is the man?" inquired the Judge. "How did you kill him, and why!"

"His name," said she, "was Thaddeus Durfee. He had killed my lover, to whom I was affianced. And I have shot him. I left him lying in the road, about two miles up the Valley. I am a woman; and I have now taken vengeance by killing the murderer of Hamilton Forbes. My name is Gertrude Finney."

There was a tremendous sensation throughout the Court House, from the Bench to the veriest lounger, for the murder of Forbes was a very notorious affair. Every one who knew about it, felt that the murderer should have been arrested and punished, by due course of law. A sense of culpability seemed to be felt just then by all the citizens present. The first general impression seemed to be that the girl had done right, and had put them all to shame. She had scarcely more than made her announcement, before she burst into tears, and wept and sobbed spasmodically. Many of the spectators, even the Court and the lawyers, wept sympathetically with her. Judge Gaylord announced that the Court was adjourned until the next morning. But for some time no one left the room; and the profound silence which prevailed, was uninterrupted for several minutes. When the girl was able to speak, she repeated her request. She said that her object was

accomplished, and she was now willing to die. She hoped that her trial would not be delayed.

She was then placed under arrest, the Court directing a gentlemanly constable to accompany her to her residence, and to see that she presented herself at the bar of the Court next morning at ten o'clock. The order was carried out. Next morning Gertrude Finney duly made her appearance, dressed as a lady; nor could a lady of more commanding beauty or more lady-like demeanor be seen in Sacramento, if even in California.

In the Eastern States such a summary proceeding could not have taken place. At the urgent wish of the prisoner, the body of her victim having been found, she was placed upon her trial immediately. A jury was struck, and her confession was taken as testimony — the only testimony submitted. The trial, after the jury was impanneled, lasted only about one hour. The indictment was for Willful Murder. The unanimous verdict was (the jury remaining in their seats), *Not guilty — on the ground of insanity!* It is doubtful if there was a single voice in that whole community disapproving of this verdict.

When Gertrude Finney had recovered from the shock of her trial and of the act which had led to it, and her innocence was established by the verdict of twelve sworn citizens, she commenced investigations concerning the affairs of Hamilton Forbes, whose murder she had so bravely and so promptly avenged. She

went to the house where he had boarded and had rooms when in Sacramento, and found that the people who kept the house were kind and conscientious. They had formed a strong attachment towards Mr. Forbes, on account of his noble and excellent qualities, which had become conspicuous to them during an acquaintance of six months. They had known of his murder, and had just heard of the manner in which Miss Finney had so justly and so terribly taken vengeance in her own hands. They heartily approved of the act, and most feelingly sympathized with her in her great trial.

Then they led her into Forbes' room; which was just in the same condition in which he had left it; left it about ten weeks before, never to return. There was his wardrobe, and there was his trunk, which was still locked, just as he had left it. They had never seen the key.

Gertrude then went to Judge Gaylord and requested him to take the proper legal steps to have the trunk opened and examined, and the property therein contained to be properly disposed of. The Judge very cordially concurred with her as to the propriety of such action, and appointed herself and two good and reliable men to open the trunk and to make the investigation. Nothing of any great consequence was found in the trunk, except a paper, which proved to be Hamilton Forbes' last Will and Testament. This was of considerable consequence, as the reader shall see.

By this will it was devised that in the event of the testator's death, Judge Gaylord should be his sole executor, and the manager of his property in California; that his Hillside mine (the mine where Forbes was killed, and which really constituted all the property of much account that he was worth) should be taken and held in possession by said Gaylord, and worked by him so long as he should deem it profitable and advisable to work it; that one-half the proceeds thereof—no matter what the amount—should be retained and owned by him, the said Gaylord, for his faithful services; and that the other moiety should be paid over, as fast as the said proceeds should accrue, to Miss Gertrude Finney, of St. Louis, Missouri, to whom he, the testator, was engaged in marriage.

As soon as the business could be legally done, they proceeded to have the Will proven in the Surrogate's Court. The upshot of the whole matter was that the Hillside mine proved to be one of the richest in California, and that one-half of it belonged to Leon Gaylord.

By his vigorous and judicious management nearly two million dollars worth of gold was taken out of it, besides the cost of working. When Gertrude Finney returned to St. Louis (after residing in Sacramento valley about three years) she was worth nearly one million dollars. She was then twenty-five years of age. Leon Gaylord's estate was, of course, increased by the same amount.

CHAPTER XVII.

HISTORY OF A PLOT.

HAD it not been for Judge Gaylord, the Sacramento district of California would have been the veriest paradise for scoundrels. His all-pervading influence affected the climate in such a way as to render it very uncomfortable for that branch of Satan's family. When any one, calling himself a man, proved to be unworthy of the name, by dishonest tricks, or petty thieving, or any vile misconduct whatever, not exactly meriting death, the punishment was by fine, banishment or whipping. Imprisonment was entirely out of the question. California could not afford the time, in those stages of the gold-seeking mania, to be building prisons. Even supposing they had prisons enough, who would have kept and guarded them? Nothing was cared for in those times, but gold, gold, gold. If a convicted criminal could not or would not pay his fine, he must leave the district within twenty-four hours, or lock arms with the whipping post. Most of this gentry would sooner leave the district than be whipped. But now and then one would brave it through; either from sheer willfulness or bravado, or as a matter of calculation and economy; in which case he would generally disappear from the firmament, under

the promise of leaving for good; and then, hoping to be forgotten, in the whirl of the times, venture again in public, at the risk of being re-arrested.

To the last mentioned class, belonged one Alfabet Louse, so called, (his real name being Luce,) who was too penurious for any thing. He, (and especially *she*,) was caught in so many acts of sneak-thieving and petty-pilfering, and a variety of other unendurable meannesses, and became such a detestable nuisance in the neighborhood, that they were brought up together, before a Justice of the peace, proven guilty of several crimes and misdemeanors — for all of which the Justice fined them one hundred dollars. If the fine was not forthcoming, in twenty-four hours, banishment from the district for two years, or twenty lashes at the public whipping post for Alfabet, and ten similar greetings for his better half. They were not the apparent owners of sufficient attachable property to satisfy much of an execution, while they were almost positively known to be worth thousands of dollars, in gold, diamonds, jewelry, etc. The popular feeling towards them under the circumstances, was therefore, not very lenient. They were given the usual number of hours, to get out, or to prepare for the alternative of whipping.

To the astonishment as well as the gratification of every body, they decided not to pay the fine. The singular truth happened to be that they loved gold-dust more than they dreaded the lash. Shame was a word

that had no meaning to them — or rather to *her*. As a forlorn hope they appealed to Judge Gaylord's Court.

When Leon reached the case, he not only affirmed the judgment of the Court below, but he scorched, with the most excoriating severity that language could inflict — especially the female creature, of such fathomless and unwomanly meanness and such brazen effrontery, and also the similitude of a man who could stand up in the presence of such a flagrant, damnable and disgusting array of facts, to ask for pardon or leniency. "Take the foul vermin from my presence," said Leon, "lest I aggravate their sentence by a duplication of it." When, at the last hour, they saw no way of escape, they promised to leave the district, but lied. They crawled out of sight for a few days, nobody knew where, and every body hoped they would never return. But they did return. The very next day, to their infinite disgust, they were re-arrested and ignominiously flogged, according to their sentence. It was the female Louse's deliberate choice, rather than pay the fine of one hundred dollars; which amount and much more, she had in her pocket, and exhibited to the officer, after the whipping was over. That functionary remarked that if he had known of the fact a little sooner, he would have been fifty per cent. more generous with the lash; thus fulfilling the scripture that "to her that hath shall be given."

Ignorance, which in the average woman is regarded as a blemish, in Lady Louse would have been a decided

blessing; for her knowledge was of a kind to make her an excrescence, rather than an ornament to society. Mrs. L. was well-educated. Cowardice, usually considered a weakness, in her would have been a virtue; for her bravery was all in the interest of immorality and law-breaking. Pride which, in others, is counted a sin, would have been a redeeming grace in her; for it would have deterred her from many foul acts of which she was guilty, by making her dread the shame and disgrace of them. Indolence, which is generally allowed to be a fault, with her would have been highly meritorious; for it would have kept her from committing many acts of mischief, making herself a dread and terror in the community. As to poor Alfabet, he would sooner be flogged than brave the sharp-edged tongue and the basilisk eyes of that wife of his.

Judge Gaylord they — or rather, *she* — never could forgive. The female Louse was extremely vindictive. And she was determined, if it took all summer, and all the fall and winter too, that those cutting blows should fly back and light upon that young and detestable Judge, like boomerangs. Her husband, she knew, could be relied upon to execute — or to do his level best to execute — whatever she might conceive, concoct and direct. They both thought that she was very shrewd. No doubt she was — in the service of Satan. She would have killed that abominable Judge, just as soon as she would have killed a snake, to use her own language, if — well, if she had only dared to. In their

various financial operations, they had become acquainted with quite a number of trafficking Indians. Now it occurred to her that they might, some how or other, utilize this branch of their acquaintance, in blasting either the life or the property of that most obnoxious Judge. As to injuring his character or reputation, she had no conception whatever of such a thing as that; for she could not see the least particle of value in any such thing as reputation or character. Moreover she possessed no means or facilities in that direction, even if she had had the disposition. But she was as bold and dangerous as she was vile and crafty.

One morning, just as the day was peeping, "Alf.," says lady Louse, "when will you see Tigertooth?"

Alfabet. I cannot tell, Carrie; but to-day, mebbe.

Lady L. Well, I want to see that Indian. You tell him what I say, Alf.—tell him to come and see me.

Alfabet. Of course, my rose-geranium, you know well enough that I shall do it. Shall I send word for him to come if I don't chance to see him?

Lady L. Yes, Alf., you send word, if he don't come round to-day.

But old Tigertooth happened along that very day, at Alfabet's shop. So he sent the old brave down to the house to see his rose-geranium, as he was ordered.

Tigertooth coming to the door of lady Louse's castle, found her alone, as usual, and thus accosted her:

"Tigertooth here. What Louse's squaw want Tigertooth for?"

Lady Louse went to an old trunk and brought a square box, made of hard wood, about three inches long and wide, and about two and a half inches high. It was made without any opening, except a hole in the bottom, about the size of a lady's little finger, and also a small key-hole. This last was a deception. The box could not be opened by any key. Then upon the back of the box were very neatly fitted two brass hinges, as if adapted to the lid.

Lady Louse. Now, Tigertooth, I want this box to be covered with bead-work, very nice and beautiful, and I will give you gold dust for pay. It must be very, *very*, VERY nice and handsome. It must be made like it had a cover; so the key would seem to unlock and open it. I'm afraid you don't understand me, Tigertooth.

Tigertooth. Ugh! me understand. Me make um very nice. Me come back next week. Good-bye.

It seems that the wife of our friend Bigtree was the most ingenious of all the squaws in bead-work. So, whenever a very nice job was wanted, it never failed but she had it to do. Tigertooth went straight to Bigtree's squaw, who then lived a few miles from Sacramento, and told her very particularly what he wanted. She agreed to have it done and ready in so many days. But in due time it was ready, just as she had agreed. There was no truer or more reliable family — father, mother and boys — among all the Indian tribes, than Bigtree's. The box, when it was finished, was indeed a

gem. It had elegant mother-of-pearl and crystals of gold quartz and various precious stones laid on with cement, with exquisite taste, intermingled with the richest beadwork.

Bigtree saw his wife at work on the box, but did not seem to take any notice of her. There was not a single word said about the box between Bigtree and his squaw. It seems that he noticed that it was a tight box, with only the semblance of a cover. He probably also noticed the extra nice work. But nobody knew at the time what he did or did not think — for he said nothing, but thought the more.

In a week the box was finished. Tigertooth went after it and took it away, paying the poor squaw one dollar and promising to pay her another. He brought the box to Lady Louse, who was very much pleased with the work, but seemed much surprised that he should charge her three dollars for so small a job. She gave him two dollars, and promised finally to give him another dollar some day, if he would go and buy her half a pound of powder and half a pound of buckshot, handing him the gold dust for them. This errand Tigertooth very cheerfully did. The Indians all like to handle and deal in this kind of goods.

When Tigertooth had gone Lady Louse took the bead-box and filled it up, through the hole in the bottom, with the powder and buckshot; shaking them down, until they were well packed in. Then she went to the trunk, and found a nice wooden plug which just

fitted the hole, and glued it in, so that it was perfectly even with the bottom of the box. Then she pasted over all the bottom a nicely fitting piece of gilt paper. Now the box had one feature which has not yet been explained. There was an ingenious contrivance inside, by the key-hole, with two percussion caps so attached that when the key was introduced and turned, as if to open the box, the caps would explode and ignite the powder without any failure whatever. That was all.

The next morning, at peep of day, Lady L., giving Alfabet a shake, "Alf," says she, "do you know what you have got to do? You must go to 'Frisco."

"Go to 'Frisco?" says Alfabet; "then you must gimme the dust to go with. What is there to be done at 'Frisco?"

Lady L. You must take down a package and put it in the Express Office, and pay the charges there, in Frisco. It is all fixed up and ready. Now, Alf, you must keep all this a dead secret. See nobody, if you can help it, and let nobody see you, and come straight back. I have got a turn-over collar and a cloth cap for you to wear, as a disguise; and when you come back I shall burn them up.

The steamer would be starting in just an hour; so they were soon dressed, and Alfabet was ready to go on his mission. Taking the package which contained the box, and a letter which she had written, done up very nicely with cords and sealing-wax, he started off, asking her no questions as to the contents.

Faithfully did Alfabet fulfill his mission, and was home again in due time.

It was Wednesday evening when he returned from San Francisco. And on Thursday morning Judge Gaylord was in his court-room, alone, looking over some papers. It was about eight o'clock in the morning.

Hearing some one enter the door, the Judge looked up and saw his old friend, Bigtree. He was coming cautiously along, in Indian style, with a sunny smile on his face. Leon, always glad to see that good old Indian face, greeted him cordially, and invited him up to sit by his side. Leon had, some time before, induced Bigtree to send his two promising twin boys, Longbone and Shortbone, to school in San Francisco; offering to pay all the expenses himself. Bigtree had modestly and gratefully accepted the generous offer, and the noble boys were doing remarkably well for that class of students; as Leon was informed every month by their teachers. The Indian brain is not prepared by hereditary influences, as the white brain is, for the reception of book knowledge. So the Indian boy is much slower in that kind of acquisition than the average white boy. But what he lacks in facility he makes up in patience. Bigtree would come to the Judge every now and then to hear from his boys. That was the meaning of his call this morning.

While Leon and Bigtree were talking about these things, the door opened again and an express agent

entered, with a little package for Hon. Leon Gaylord. Bigtree rose up and started to go; but Leon prevented him, and urged him to stay until the opening of the Court, which would be in less than two hours. So Bigtree staid with him awhile, and seemed very much pleased to have the privilege. In fact, he seemed just about as happy as he was capable of being, whenever he could be in "Gaylud's" company.

The Judge now proceeded to open his express package. He found therein the magnificent box, and a nicely written letter in a female hand. The first thing he did was to open and read the letter. It was as follows: —

San Francisco, June 14th, 18—

Hon. Judge Leon Gaylord:

Dear Sir — Your noble and successful efforts in behalf of Temperance and Morality, have given you an enviable reputation, both far and wide. That you may know and realize something of the manner in which these efforts are appreciated by a few ladies in this city, the friends of law and order, we herewith most respectfully send you, by express, a very fine gold watch; which you will please find in the little bead-box contained in the package. The key to open the same is attached to the box, by a ribbon. We beg you will accept of this trifling manifestation of our esteem and admiration, for your earnest labors in the cause of humanity.

Hattie Hill, Isadora Dana.
Eliz. Meredith, Mary A. Hill,

Leon then took up the beautiful box, and, after

studying its rich exterior, untied the key, and was thus proceeding to introduce it and open the box, when Bigtree, who was seeing everything with his eyes, suddenly checked him.

Bigtree. Stop, Gaylud! Mischief box! No open box! Box no open! Kill Gaylud! Mebbe!

Leon at this suggestion dropped the key, and looked at Bigtree with surprise.

Leon. Why, Bigtree — why do you think so?

Bigtree. Me seen box. Bad box! Devil box! Gaylud no open box! Shoot Gaylud! Mebbe!

The possibility of danger in the box then flashed upon Leon's mind, and he concluded at once not to open it with the key. What should he do with it? Bigtree then told him, in his laconic way, all that he knew about the box. Then Leon sent for a machinist, and had three good witnesses called in, when he locked the door. The machinist carefully bored a hole in the bottom of the box; when they found, to the consternation of all present, and especially of Leon and Bigtree, that it was full of powder and large shot. By degrees the box was emptied, and the contents carefully saved. Then the box itself was sawed in two length-wise, and the diabolical contrivance all laid bare. The percussion caps were discovered, and the manner in which they were intended to ignite the gunpowder, and produce an awful and fatal explosion. The key was then introduced and turned, and the two caps exploded — harmlessly, of course, because the powder had all been

removed. Thus the murderous intent of the contriver was clearly demonstrated. All who witnessed the exposition were dismayed and horrified.

Leon did not allow his Court to be postponed. Before ten o'clock everything was put in order. The machinist took charge of the box and contents. The Judge commissioned Bigtree to trace the would-be murderer, if possible, through Tigertooth. This Bigtree thought he should be able to do. Upon all the witnesses was enjoined the most profound secresy.

Thus Bigtree, the noble Modoc Indian, was instrumental in saving Leon Gaylord's life the second time.

Tigertooth had called several times upon Mrs. Louse for the other dollar which she owed him; and she had finally told him that she should not pay it — that she had already paid him enough. This had given the old man great offense, though he had kept the matter to himself. The Indian never divulges a secret, even of an enemy, except it be for the purpose of achieving some towering revenge. When Bigtree met Tigertooth, upon the day of the exposure, he shrewdly approached the subject by asking Tigertooth, in the name of his squaw, for the other dollar which he owed her for working the box. Tigertooth, who would sooner have been flayed alive than to have divulged any secret, had he not been misused and cheated, or egregiously offended in some way, now told Bigtree all about it — all that he knew. He told him who the woman was that had the box, and all about the gun-

powder and buckshot. (Tigertooth had not positively known that there was anything wrong about the box, whatever he might have suspected.) This information Bigtree promptly conveyed to "Gaylud." The Judge immediately sent officers, with the proper documents, and had Mrs. Carrie Louse, or Luce, brought before him in the most unceremonious haste; where she was confronted by Tigertooth, by the vestiges of the box and all its contents, and by her husband Alfabet, who tremblingly, frankly and truthfully stated his innocent connection with the package. Now, what had the she-devil to say? She was dumb-founded. She was out of her reckoning. She was all at sea. She was nowhere.

At first she obstinately refused to talk. But Leon soon had her cured of that notion, by telling her that unless she would speak, and speak to the purpose, he would hand her over to the miners and tell them what she had been doing. This frightened her so that she confessed circumstantially the whole chapter of her infamy, and all about this intended murder. She made a clean breast of it, and threw herself upon the mercy of the Court.

These proceedings were all in private. Had they been in open court, the miserable creature would not have been allowed to live an hour. The enraged populace would have strung her up on the first tree. So great was the popularity of Leon Gaylord — such the universal affection towards him — such the nature of

her crime, and such the character she had established for herself, that if the miners had known the facts above narrated, her life would not have been worth the cost of a hempen cord. Leon told her plainly that she had but one chance for her life. That was for her to make her escape from California before the affair was published. He would not vouch for her safety a single hour. She would be as unsafe in San Francisco as in Sacramento. She had better leave the territory on wings, if she had any, and if she considered her life worth the trouble.

With this warning, the frightened wretch, with her feeble-minded man, was allowed to make her escape. An officer was appointed to follow at her heels, and to see that the place was well rid of them, bag and baggage; with the positive assurance that the whole matter, in detail, would be published in one week, in the newspapers of both towns. She would have taken the risk of remaining in San Francisco, but Alfabet, being a coward, would not consent to that. So they embarked upon the first steamer for the port of New York.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SLIPPERY AS AN EEL.

MANY were the fortunes, proud and princely, which were tossed about, from hand to hand, among the Oil-wells of Venango county. "Rich one day and poor the next," was the story which was often told — told of hundreds in that charmed locality — story as full of truth as the book of Esther. Never was the power of human beings to resist temptation so thoroughly tested. Never were the souls of mortals so severely tried, upon this terraqueous planet.

The tidings went abroad from the county of Venango, in Pennsylvania, with the celerity of lightning — flying from mountain to valley and from city to hamlet, on the wings of the telegraph. Far and near were the tidings echoed, of the wonderful developments in that sterile region. Like the gourd of Jonah, all at once a great city arose in the desert — a vast, populous and amazing city — a rattling, thundering and tremendous city — where thousands of human beings were crowding other thousands, each one jostling his neighbor. In a few months were brought together from all points of the compass, all varieties of the human race. The old and the young were there — the polished and refined, in the most intimate relations

with the unkempt and vulgar — the poor wise man and the rich and purse-proud fool, on sociable terms — Jew and Gentile in the same bed — each forgetful of his religion, forgetful of his former differences, forgetful of everything but filthy lucre — all in their selfishness and craving, crowding and jostling each other.

Rosco Bower was never slow of hearing certain sounds. That is to say, he was quick to hear a jingle, when that particular jingle arose from the sudden contact of gold or silver with other gold or silver. Some might regard it as a strange phenomenon, that Rosco could hear with distinctness, the clink and jingle, while sitting in his cosy cottage in Charming Valley, in a listening posture; silently listening, with an ear inclined towards the county of Venango; namely, in the direction of the oil-wells of that locality. Sweet and melodious was the sound on the ear-drum of Rosco Bower — sweet and melodious as the sound of the sweetest music. Nay, much sweeter than that; for the instance is nowhere on record, in which music has been heard at so great a distance by human ear. So if the distance at which sounds may be heard be the measure of their sweetness, one point is made out with regard to Rosco — upon our own testimony.

While this man was listening, with such absorbing interest, to the chinking and the clinking in Venango county, he felt a yearning — if that be the strongest word in the language of its kind — felt a yearning in his avaricious soul to follow the sound to its origin, and there feast his ears upon it in full fruition.

He was a man of great thought and study. Not only that, he was also a man of action. Sometimes, indeed, his action was very prompt — it might almost be said, in some instances, altogether too prompt. Not a very communicative man was he. Now one morning he rose up and took out his satchel from its dark lodging place. It was all covered with dust. It had never been disturbed before, or broken of its rest, since Rosco first brought it home, with the double intention of doubling Cape Horn, and ten times doubling his fortune in the land of gold. In that instance his wife interposed and prevented his action in that direction; and now again he brought out the satchel and brushed off the dust.

It must not be forgotten that he had always been a man of fortune; although some very envious people very enviously insisted that the word should here be spelt l-u-c-k. Others again assured him that his judgment, on financial questions, was something which might be called intuitive. This, together with the fact that he had seldom, if ever, in all his Charming Valley transactions, been known to make an abortive speculation, gave him a degree of self-confidence, which those envious people endeavored to persuade each other was self-conceit.

Besides, it seemed to be an opinion generally accepted, that almost any man with plenty of money, even with financial abilities far inferior to those of Rosco Bower, might secure a fortune almost any morning in

the week, before breakfast, out there in Venango county among the oil-wells.

Every body knew that Rosco Bower had the money — either the ready stamps or the solid collaterals. So, self-complacently and with a secretive and reticent air, as if he had said, "nobody about here knows enough to give *me* advice," whistling "Hail Columbia," hardly above his breath, he packed his satchel one morning and started off for the oil-wells.

True it was that he had enough — quite enough — already, for a man of reasonable and just ambition — especially for a man living so far from the city, where there were no little dingy, suspicious looking places, lighted by gas in the day time — places for dealing in stocks or for gambling — where there was no occasion or even excuse, for more than six or eight house servants at once, and where there was no absolute necessity for any very great number of real Parisian wardrobes. There was not a man in all the township regarded as his equal, in the mysteries of farming, in financial shrewdness and in the talent of self-protection. In a word, he was considered about the wealthiest and thriftiest farmer in the Valley. But he had to visit the Oil Regions. Compelled by a certain itching of soul — an incurable chronic itching with which he was suffering — that is to say, incurable by any other means — it was morally impossible for him to stay away. So he started one morning with just his satchel and the invoice of articles therein contained, for the Eldorado of Venango county.

We have already stated that Rosco was not possessed of the most communicative sort of disposition. Scarcely had he informed a neighbor — in fact he had studiously neglected to enlighten any one, as to his thoughts and intentions on the subject. It is very strange — in fact one of the mysteries of Psychology — how some things come, in the first instance, to be promulgated and put in circulation. At least twenty-four hours before he was ready to start, it was whispered currently throughout the Valley, that Rosco had decided in his mind to visit the Oil Regions, with money in his eye — namely, to speculate in petroleum lands and oil-wells in the county of Venango.

Without exception they all agreed — all the savans of the Valley — it was a unanimous thing — that the undertaking could not, by any human possibility, be a failure — that in the hands of Rosco Bower, it could not help but be a prodigious success. They all pretended to be glad on account of his prospective increase of fortune — while there is much reason to believe — reason not necessary to be introduced here — to believe that many — if not each and every mother's son of them — felt now and then a twinge of envy shooting through his heart, as plainly, if not as painfully, as a twinge of neuralgia; or a gnawing wish, as distinctly, if not as disagreeably, as the gnawings of hunger — that Rosco might not succeed, very extensively, in the object of his expedition. Whatever might have been the animus of these wishes — whether real friendship

or something else — and we will not deny that in all probability it was something else — no doubt they were in the exact line of his truest and most substantial interest.

Rosco felt himself to be a man of consequence. For in his book of definitions, consequence was a thing of money. And he had too much self-respect to advise with his inferiors. So he kept his own counsel. Without compromising a particle of dignity, with no confidant and without a servant to attend him, he started and reached the oil-wells, with his satchel.

It was a very noisy place — too noisy for anything. In fact Rosco was nearly distracted. There was such an awful hubbub! There were such unprecedented noises, and such a babel of confusion! What congregations of foolish and crazy people! What astonishing, what headlong transactions! What enormous sums of money flash before the eyes of Rosco! What unparalleled recklessness! What wastefulness of pure genuine petroleum! What shooting fountains! What streams and torrents! Wealth uncounted and unaccountable pouring up like water from the deep, dark, subterranean spaces! Like a beautiful dream, dazzling, stunning and bewildering — glorious to the eyes, overpowering and heavenly — are the fortunes — the dancing, leaping, glittering fortunes — escaping from their cavernous prisons in the unfathomed rocks and coal-beds! Money as plentiful and common as potatoes! Gold and bank notes almost like pebbles for abundance!

But pebbles must be gathered; potatoes must be garnered. Every man must be on the alert, choosing his methods and his opportunities. Every man has qualities in common with petroleum. For every man will presently find his level — his true level — at the great oil emporium of Venango.

For one whole day Rosco Bower stood aghast with wonder, and aloof from everybody. When he recovered his self-possession, he discovered with his quick mind, the unparalleled opportunities for speculation, and that on the grandest of scales.

Rather unpretentiously he settled himself down at the Bond House, situated in Oil City. Tolerably soon thereafter he casually met with one General Skinner, a most gentlemanly and interesting stranger, from Chicago. It was said by some one in his hearing — Rosco Bower had a quick ear for such things — that the General was worth, at the very lowest estimate, over a million dollars.

Rosco took a great fancy to the General, and the General seemed fully to reciprocate his friendship. In fact there seemed to be, from the very first, a mutual liking — not to say an affinity — between them. It seemed to Rosco almost providential, that their rooms were side by side. For several days they spent much of the time together, chiefly in the General's parlor. They were often seen arm in arm together — often noticed out among the oil-wells, closely engaged in conversation.

Skinner's very clothes seemed to be literally lined with money. Then there was money lying carelessly round him in the room — on the bed — on the bureau — on the chairs — on the windows, — and even on the floor — just where it might happen to light — just where it might be carelessly thrown. It did seem to Rosco that this man was most recklessly indifferent as to what became of it. He talked of his little transactions, which to Rosco seemed almost fabulous in extent — of his little speculations, involving only a hundred thousand dollars or so — as if such things were just an easy pastime for him. Then he took Rosco into his confidence, and disclosed to him some very interesting secrets. Among other things, he informed him how to do it himself — how to make a countless fortune for himself. At length — probably for his first exercise — "Friend Bower," said the General, "I've a little project on hand just now — a little favorite project of my own — which, if successful, must yield me, at the very least, a hundred thousand — that is to say, it must yield at the very lowest estimate, certainly not less than a hundred thousand dollars. I need, for the accomplishment of this little transaction, just your assistance. This will afford you a good opportunity to begin; and if you prove expert, we will then try our hands at something larger and better. I will now explain the whole matter in a few words. It can be put in a nutshell.

"There is the Minturn Section, which you may

recollect I pointed out to you yesterday, containing four hundred acres of land, more or less. This property I am exceedingly anxious to secure the ownership of; for I am positively assured of a hundred thousand dollars profit, the moment I shall achieve the title, at the price which I have fixed; and that price is fifty thousand dollars.

"The difficulty with me lies just here. I have a certain rival — a wealthy rival from Chicago — who is constantly watching my movements. Knowing that my speculations are invariably successful, when I make a bid on any piece of property he is sure to go above me in his offer; thus forcing and compelling me to pay exorbitant prices, and thus checkmating me in some of my best operations. Now, this Minturn Section — this farm of four hundred acres — lies adjoining the Parker Section; which Parker Section, as we observed yesterday, has several flowing wells upon it, one of which produces eighty barrels *per diem*. For this Minturn Section I will readily pay the square sum of fifty thousand dollars. The Parker Farm could not be purchased for six times that amount. This sum I will pay in current funds to-morrow, at the opening of the banks. Take notice, now, friend Bower, if you will make this little purchase, and secure this property for me, I will give you for your service — freely and gladly will I pay you ten thousand dollars. Here, in this package, is half the amount. Count it. This, friend Bower, is your own. I pay it to you in advance. Let it bind

the bargain between us. Then the rest I will give you to-morrow. When the speculation is closed up — take notice — when I clear the hundred thousand dollars — I will give you another bonus; another bonus of ten thousand dollars, in addition to this first one. With your assistance, Bower, there will be no difficulty, I think, in bringing this about; no difficulty whatever. Should you, from any cause, fail to make the purchase at the price of fifty thousand dollars, there will be nothing lost — at least, nothing but our time and trouble. In that case you will merely refund me the money here advanced. Of course, it will be necessary for you to make the purchase in your own name, as otherwise suspicion will be excited, and we shall lose the speculation altogether. You see from this, friend Bower, what unbounded confidence I repose in you. But I have no fear. Your integrity, to me, is transpicuous. I judge other men by myself, and this is my rule. When I fall in with a man towards whom I feel an instinctive aversion, I am convinced that that man is a rogue, and I avoid him. But when, at first sight and all along, I feel attracted towards a man — feel a sort of affinity for him, as it were — I know he is a true man. I have never yet been deceived. I was drawn towards you, Bower, from the very first. You see I have not distrusted you. I have no fear, whatever, concerning your fidelity. You can be of great advantage to me, I confess. But then, I am a believer in reciprocity. I will see that your recompense is ample,

and that many advantages accrue to you hereafter. Be sure to make this purchase in your own name, merely agreeing to pay the money to-morrow. Then this evening we will meet, when the matter can all be arranged between us. You shall make the title over to me, and I will give you a check which will draw the currency in the morning."

Rosco Bower was effectually magnetized. He walked abroad as if his newly-made fortune were already a foregone fact, and sought the owner of the coveted property — the ostensible owner of the Minturn Section. For several hours he labored with that gentleman, employing all the shrewdness and diplomatic skill he possessed, in order to effect the purchase. But that gentleman was seemingly very indifferent about selling. The price he had fixed upon the property was sixty thousand dollars, and it was only by a compromise of the difference, after a long and anxious negotiation on the part of Rosco, that the matter was finally consummated. The difference — ten thousand dollars — was divided equally, Rosco conceding five thousand. So the deed was made out. Rosco paid over the sum which he had just received from General Skinner, in order to place the transaction beyond contingency; and then simply gave his little bond for fifty thousand more, payable in three days. Strange to say, it never entered this man's bedizened head that there could possibly be any "slip between cup and lip."

He was exceedingly gratified. For, notwithstanding

he had parted with the five thousand dollars, he felt sure of at least five thousand more, with also the contingent prospect of another ten thousand at the close of the General's speculation.

When the business had arrived at this stage, he returned triumphantly to the Bond House, there to meet his friend, the General, and to talk the matter over in all its phases and aspects; there to draw the transfer papers, and to close up the whole transaction with the General; proud and delighted with his success, feeling sure in his mind that he had certainly cleared five thousand, and probably ten thousand dollars in a single day.

Strange to say, the General was not there. Something unusual must have detained him. However, this was but a small matter with the General. He was probably engaged in some larger speculation. Several hours was Rosco waiting in his room, holding conversation with himself from different standpoints, concerning the absence of General Skinner. Finally, inquiring at the office of the hotel, he found, to his unutterable dismay, that he — that General Skinner — was not there any more; not in the Bond House; found that he had paid his reckoning and had left — not only the house, but had left the city, bag and baggage. Left for parts unknown.

Rosco. But did he leave no papers for me?

Clerk. He left no papers with *me*, sir,

Rosco. Why was he called away so suddenly? Do you know of his receiving any telegrams?

Clerk. No. He seemed to be under no excitement; said he had finished his business, then paid his bill and took the five o'clock train for Buffalo, with all his baggage.

Rosco. Look — see if I have a letter, please.

Clerk. (Examining Rosco's pigeon-hole.) No letter for you, Mr. Bower.

Now, like a gush of light, did the truth flash upon Bower's mind. He now suddenly realized that he had bought the Minturn Section for *himself.* And upon a little inquiry and investigation, found also that he had bought of a party who was probably acting in the interest of General Skinner — in a word, that he had bought the property of General Skinner himself, in a round about way. He saw clearly now — and it was a sight that almost took away his breath — that he was bound by legal contract to pay for the property himself, and in United States currency — bound to pay the sum of fifty thousand dollars, in three days time.

A change came over the spirit of his dreams, as by Mephistophelean magic. Thus is poor mortal man — especially the selfish worldling — fitly compared to the veriest insect, that flutters around the brilliant, blinding, burning blaze of the taper, to the loss of his wings and sometimes his life.

Where, O, where was Skinner? Rosco was now frightened and almost paralyzed. His bravery was quite luxuriant upon the surface, but had very little depth of soil. The loveliest views are often the most dissolving.

All excitement, almost frantic, he flew round like any wind-mill, seeking information and advice. No body seemed to take much interest in him, or in his troubles. No one seemed to feel any anxiety whatever with regard to his welfare — either with regard to his welfare or his misery. Every man he approached seemed as cold as an icicle. No one could tell him what to do. None seemed able or even anxious to afford him relief. He felt that his case was exceedingly critical, if not desperate. His next thought was to rush forth for legal counsel. Neither did he derive any aid or comfort from that source. The laws of Pennsylvania afforded him no consolation whatever.

Finally, he attempted to effect the sale of the property of "the Minturn Section — section containing four hundred acres — adjoining the celebrated Parker Section, with several flowing wells upon it; one of at least eighty barrels *per diem*."

He did not succeed in finding a purchaser. Other "leads" were more attractive. He was only able to realize one offer, and even *that* was not repeated — an offer of the paltry sum of ten thousand dollars.

* * * * * *

Sad fate of poor Rosco Bower! In fifteen days from the morning, when, with the most exalted anticipations, he left his lovely cottage in the heart of Charming Valley — independent, happy and proud; happy in his domestic life and relations, proud of his wealth and prosperity, of his thrift and reputation; just

fifteen days from that morning, when he started with his satchel for the oil-wells of Venango, he returned home all overwhelmed with grief and misery; a wretched, insolvent and ruined man. For he had purchased the Minturn Section, which of course he was obliged to pay for; and that without delay, without remedy and without redress. So, in order to raise those fifty thousand dollars, for which he was irrevocably bound as in a vice, there was much unavoidable sacrifice and shrinkage suffered upon all kinds of goods and chattels, upon farms and buildings, and all kinds of property belonging to Rosco, resulting from the summary sale and transfer. Thus all his means, of every name and nature, were swallowed up and extinguished in the vortex.

Rosco Bower was now moneyless and poor — penniless, destitute and bankrupt. For the Minturn Section proved comparatively worthless; scarcely paying the necessary costs and expenses of the various processes and litigation.

CHAPTER XIX.

DESPAIR AND HOPE.

BERTHA'S legal name, as the reader understands, was Forester, but she still went by the name of Bertha Bower. Once, already — and that before the age of twenty — had she been widowed, according to man's ordination, and, in her own judgment, *twice*. Still, in the sight of heaven, she was betrothed and still unmarried. Never yet had she been separated from the home of her parents, except when at school. Most of the time during the four years which preceded the pecuniary collapse of her father at the oil wells had she devoted herself, with remarkable industry and success, to the acquirement of a high-class education. Herein had Rosco done what he could to break the force of his daughter's fearful reverses and disappointments. But the primary inspiration which led to this most important result came through Mrs. Bower. She herself was the daughter of an eminent scientist and physician, who had not neglected her education, but had also done what he could to render it a practical and perpetual blessing. Of course, the thought did not originate with Rosco, except as a temporary expedient, to divert Bertha's mind from Leon Gaylord. The ways of Providence are mysterious. This very device, thus

intended by him for a baleful purpose, was made the means of kindling in Bertha an inextinguishable thirst for learning. It led to the development of her rare and splendid genius; by which she was afterwards able to serve as her father's benefactor. Mrs. Bower had favored, with all her influence, Bertha's intellectual culture, by the best education possible. And through her persistent and mild endeavors, Rosco's mercenary heart had been touched to a good purpose.

His willingness to do everything he could to mitigate the evils that had fallen upon his child through his own officious and guilty agency may possibly have some weight upon the reader's mind in relieving the darker aspect of his character.

Bertha's schooling finished (not her education), she had returned to the Charming Valley cottage, like a ray of heavenly sunlight, to chase away the dismal ghost of sordid and selfish worldliness, and to fill it with literary and intellectual luxuries. She made it a constant delight to the appreciative inmates, and an attraction to all others who loved literature, science or art.

Then there was little Nellie; we cannot afford to overlook *her*. But who — who was little Nellie? She was Bertha's little daughter. Yes, Bertha had a little daughter — as beautiful and fresh as a rosebud. She was just five years old when the thunderbolt met them — when the great tidal billow of adversity overtook them. An angel straight from the battlements of

heaven could never have filled her office more sweetly and more delightfully, nor shed a more delicious light around her, nor filled the air with more witching melody than did charming little Nellie Forester.

Bertha's excellent mother was a genuine and noble woman. She had a heart overflowing with pity and well stored with Christianity. Now, when the air was thick with the darkness of adversity, her mild radiance was more conspicuous and shone with a clearer light than ever. More manifest were her virtues. Now, when the soul of Rosco was crushed and flattened as beneath a huge millstone, she was all in readiness, armed with pries and levers, with balms, tonics and restoratives. When the tempest raged and the waves rolled over him, she performed heroic service, in rescuing him from utterly destructive shipwreck.

Sadly and most wofully wrecked he was; broke amidships and on his beam ends; cargo overboard and lost; stove to splinters all his bulk-heads; rigging all torn in shreds and spoiled; swept were his decks and shattered were all his masts and bulwarks; his sails were all in strings, and his helm was disabled; submerged were his pumps; broken was his compass; and from bowsprit to rudder — from keel to gunwale — he was all a wreck.

Ho! to the rescue! Quick! Man the life-boat! Man the life-boat with the women! with wife and daughter and little Nell! Take him on! take him on the life-boat. This is his only chance — the only hope for poor Rosco Bower!

Thus, finally, was Rosco rescued, and saved from going down — from sinking. Saved was he on this little unostentatious life-boat; by skillful and masterly navigation; saved by discreet seamanship — by cheerfulness and kindness. Saved was he by operative Christianity; by true Christian love and vigilance; by hopeful, persevering, undiscouraged love. Rosco was thus saved from hopeless shipwreck and ruin. Saved from ruin was he by this skillful trio of navigators — wife and daughter and little Nell.

* * * * * *

If the reader will pause for a moment and review Bower's character at this point, so far as our faint delineation of it will enable him to do so, he will hardly fail to perceive that the condition of this man was truly forlorn and pitiable; not so much, by any means, from his sudden poverty in worldly goods as from his beggarly poverty of soul. Many will feel that his case was one which requires but little sympathy; while others, with broader charity and more liberal views, will not be entirely indifferent as to his fate. Our own opinion is that such a man should be treated with a goodly measure of commiseration. All men are largely the creatures of circumstance. Even Napoleon the Great was no exception. For a long time, it is true, Napoleon was the master of circumstances; but at last he became their subject and victim. If he had succeeded at Waterloo, and had carried out his plans for the improvement of France, who can say how

much more dazzling his fame would have been in the eyes of mankind to-day than it now is? Yet even Napoleon might have left the world, and probably did leave it, with a far better character before God than if his exit had been a triumphant one, in the worldly sense.

Far be it from us to extenuate or apologize for the faults of Rosco Bower at this stage of his career. No doubt he required for his thorough reformation, the most radical and severe treatment. It may have been a kind Providence that interposed in his overthrow and complete humiliation. The career of others was also greatly modified, and perhaps greatly benefited, by his catastrophe. He serves as an example for others, by which they may profit. The world is altogether too full of unhumiliated Rosco Bowers.

From this time forward Rosco experienced a great improvement of eye-sight — not meaning his physical, but his spiritual and moral sight. He now looked upon life, looked upon men and money, upon human motives, duty and conduct, in a new light — in a light more just and natural. He also had a new view of himself; in which his contemptible meanness, his narrowness of mind and overshadowing selfishness filled nearly the entire field of vision. He now saw himself on his appropriate plane; at his true weight and value; unexalted, uninflated, unloaded and unenlarged by self-delusion. His first sensation, after such an exhibition of himself to his own observation, at his present stand-

point, was very shocking and very excruciating to his heart. His worldly overthrow had the immediate effect to knock from under him all the high scaffolding which his pride had built up, and upon which he had exalted himself, and to place him upon a surer though humbler foundation. The change was, of course, necessary and very propitious. Very severe was the chastisement, but thoroughly deserved and deplorably needed. Its effect was most salutary upon his soul; and, withal, very quickening to his spiritual sense.

Thus, when a man of narrow vision and short sight is elevated upon some tower or high place, he sees himself, as he stands related to other objects, vastly magnified above his natural and just proportions; and when, by some sudden accident or exigency, he descends to the common level of the world, he stares about him astonished and confounded at the magnitude of other objects beside himself — stands aghast and profoundly wonders at his own reduced dimensions, as compared with other people and other objects.

Bertha, with her quick perception, was not slow to take in the new situation; and, with deep and painful emotions, saw and realized the full shock of the downfall.

She was young and beautiful, graceful and refined; she was elegant and accomplished; gifted with the brilliant endowments of genius. By the advantages which she had industriously improved, and her rare facility of acquisition, she had obtained a very fine and

excellent education. Her skill in music, both in execution and teaching, gave her an enviable distinction with the savants of that science. In volume, compass and modulation of voice, she was rarely excelled. Sweet and pathetic were her strains as the harp of Orpheus; with the richness of the organ swell and the liquid soprano of the dulcimer. Then, too, her remarkable skill with the pencil and her inimitable mastery with the chisel had no rivalry but that of Nature itself.

Now did Bertha bring into requisition all her gifts of genius and learning, in this great and trying emergency. Kindly and with the most affectionate earnestness she approached her father, in the depth of his humiliation, and thus feelingly said:

"Keep good heart, now, father, I beseech you. Heaven has sent this reverse upon us for our benefit. Let us not be disheartened, for I am sure it has been sent by the command of God. For one, I am determined to turn it to a good account. Don't be offended, please, and I will tell you what I think about it."

Rosco. But Heaven need not have spoken so loud. I could have heard and heeded a smaller voice.

Bertha. Are you sure of that, papa? I am not. Heaven knew best about it. Suppose that you had saved all your property, and that mamma had been taken sick and died. Or, suppose that even your naughty child had been taken away forever. Would you have liked that better, papa?

Rosco (with emotion). No, my dear Bertha, no.

Bertha. (Kissing her father). Well, then, let us be thankful to Heaven that our lives are all spared. If not, perhaps the next time God will take one of us. I am so thankful, papa, that it was not you, nor dear mamma, that was taken away, instead of the property. Heaven knew which to take from us for our good. As for me, I am sure I shall be all the better and more useful for this misfortune. We call it a misfortune, but I trust the time will come — I intend it shall — when we shall not call it a misfortune, but one of the greatest blessings of our lives. Listen! Do you hear mamma singing? I really think that I never saw mamma so happy before.

Now, papa, I have something to tell you. I am going to show you what I can do, and how much I love you. This talking about such things is of little account. I propose to do something besides talk. I am going to Philadelphia, to find a situation as a vocalist or teacher. Mamma and I have talked it all over. You will hear from me, if I live. I shall try to convince you that Heaven has been our friend, in sending this reverse upon us. Wait patiently a few weeks, and you shall hear from Bertha, to your comfort and joy.

Rosco. Bertha, I never appreciated you before as I do now. I feel stronger now. If God will only spare your life and your dear mother's, I believe I can bear any trouble whatever. But, dear child, how can we spare you from home?

Bertha. You shall hear from me very often. Re-

member that your child, young as she is, has seen darker days than these. She is still alive — alive, not only to be happy herself, but happy only in making others so; and of all others in the world, her dearest father and mother. (Enter Mrs. Bower, singing.)

Now, mamma, I have been telling papa all about it — all about my going to Philadelphia and teaching. You know I shall go straight to Uncle Raphael's. He will give me a good welcome, I am sure. You must stick by papa while I am gone. I shall soon get something to do; and I have no doubt some great good will come out of all this.

It was very hard, indeed, for Bertha to part from her father, in his bitter affliction. As to her mother, she was not so much concerned. When they were in prosperous circumstances, it was nothing — or nothing very trying — for Bertha to leave home for a few months. It was different now — very widely different. Had her father felt about their trouble as she did, or as her mother did, Bertha could have gone away in the best of spirits. But, as it was, she shed a few tears slily, in spite of herself, just on *his* account. However, she was very sly about it. Very quickly she dismissed those intrusive visitors, with a sweet smile, whenever she came in his presence.

It seemed almost the worst pinch of all for them to part with little Nellie. It pulled very hard upon their heart-strings, especially Mrs. Bower's, to give up that treasure. But it was necessary, and she approved of

Bertha's going. In fact, Rosco could not object, knowing the strait they were in, and knowing Bertha's excellent qualifications for business.

Bertha was soon ready to start; for she made short work of packing their trunks. Then, with full hearts, with tears of affection and love, and with smiles of cheerful hope, these parents and children parted — fervently blessing each other, and Bertha, with her darling little daughter, took the railway train for Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XX.

ENTERPRISE AND SUCCESS.

WHEN Bertha had safely reached Philadelphia, she went directly to the house of Raphael Morris, her uncle. Never before, since her first term at boarding-school, had she been in the presence of this rich and friendly relative. Her schooling had been principally in New Brunswick; and she had never returned to Philadelphia until now. When her uncle saw and learned who she was — saw her noble bearing and listened to her delightful conversation, in which her rare gifts and accomplishments were apparent, he was touched to the heart, and veritably enraptured. He received her with demonstrations of excessive joy and overflowing welcome — he was a man of a very warm and emotional nature — and said:

"Blessings upon you, my precious niece. Welcome — a thousand welcomes to the hospitalities of our house. We wish you would stay with us forever. Stay with us and be happy; and your happiness shall also be ours. Make our house your home and sanctuary."

From the central depths of her heart did Bertha thank him. Through her welling tears did she sincerely thank and bless him. After she had been made

to feel that she was really at home, and after she was well refreshed and rested, she introduced the subject-matter of her visit. She rehearsed to them — to her uncle and his wife, — her eventful story, so tragic, and yet so romantic. She told them of her first love and betrothal, and all about her true lover Leon Gaylord — of their strange and cruel separation; of their correspondence, and of his shocking death in Cincinnati. She told them of her frantic mental suffering and strange experience, and of her inconsolable grief and undying sorrow. Then she described the circumstances and scenes of her marriage — her most inexplicable marriage — with the wayward Forester — how she had accepted him by the over-persuasion of her father, and in the forlornness of desperation — how he had vanished so quickly and so tragically from her presence, and had never since been heard of. Thus she recited to them all her sad bereavements and her cruel and crushing disappointments. Finally, she related all about her father's recent misfortunes — his supreme disaster, involving him and his family in financial ruin and poverty. With such glowing eloquence of expression, in language heart-touching and full of pathos, did she rehearse the painful and melancholy story, that her uncle's heart was filled with deep and tearful sympathy.

Little Nellie, as she went flitting lightly about, through the parlors, seemed to him like a fairy from the bright ethereal regions; now vanishing and now

re-appearing, and every where she went, scattering sweetness around her; or, like a bird of the most thrilling beauty — the sweetest and daintiest warbler of the season — skipping from branch to branch, carolling and fluttering, overflowing with enjoyment and with song.

When Uncle Morris was able to speak again, this was his strain:

"Bertha, you are truly welcome here, as my precious niece — nay, as my own darling daughter. Our house shall be your refuge and your home. This little sunbeam — this bewitching little fairy — I now bespeak of you, for my own. Let me have her, I pray you, as really mine. Let me educate her. She shall be trained and nourished as if she were a princess — nay, as if she were the daughter of an emperor."

To this enthusiastic gush of kindness, Bertha replied, in a voice trembling with emotion:

"Dearest Uncle, most opportune is the hospitality which you so lovingly offer me. With unspeakable and heartfelt thanks I accept and appreciate it; but with one reserved privilege, as a condition which I must hold sacred, and paramount to all things else I must find some immediate employment. For my dear father and mother's sake, I must find some situation in which I can turn my acquirements to some good and profitable account. For their relief and benefit especially, and also as a duty which I owe to God and the world, I must, if possible, enter upon some kind of

service in the field of Education. This is my purpose and mission, in coming to this city. Most gratefully do I accept of your munificent bounty as far as consistent with the proper discharge of these imperative duties and obligations."

After this explanation, and without a single hour of idle delay, with Mrs. Morris' blessing superadded to her uncle's, Bertha went forth to seek employment. Not only did her good uncle allow her to pursue her own course in the premises, but assisted, as far as possible, both by furnishing her with much valuable information about the city, and by sending her wherever she wanted to go, in his own carriage. With reliance upon herself, and with faith in God, with a noble presence and a manner and address full of inspiration and magnetism, went she forth throughout the great city. By well-timed and judicious efforts, and by providential favor, she was not long in securing a situation well-adapted to her taste — and it may be added — and some may consider it the best part of the story — well-adapted to her necessities. She found a situation, which, had she been allowed to make her own selection, would have been the very one chosen. That is, she was tendered the chair of First Preceptress, and teacher of the Fine Arts, in one of the oldest and wealthiest institutions in the city — an institution of the very highest character.

When she returned and informed her uncle and aunt of her success, Mrs. Morris of course, was glad in her

heart; and her mild, pleasant words and sweet smiles, gave sufficient expression to her joy. But Raphael was a different kind of person. He was like a mountain stream, that never makes much fuss in dry weather. Then it ripples along among the stones, as quietly as possible — almost as if it felt ashamed to be seen; attracting but little attention, trickling down the falls with but little noise or bluster; but in a sudden storm or heavily pouring rain, it swells to a fearful size, and comes foaming and thundering down the ravine over rock and cataract, sweeping everything before it. Uncle Raphael was overjoyed. He seemed about as happy as it was safe to be, in that season of the year.

"Such a thing as this," he said, "is most wonderful. It is entirely without a parallel in history, that a girl from the outside, vulgar country, so rough and uncultivated — I mean the country — a girl so young and unacquainted with the ways of the city — so entirely inexperienced in teaching — should come to this great city, and in less than three days, single-handed and alone, succeed in capturing the best female situation it possesses! It is altogether nearly incredible. I'm afraid it is nothing but a shadow, an unsubstantial dream. Nellie, my little bird, come and pinch your old uncle, and plague him and tease him, and wake him up out of this dream. Bertha, I am positively proud of you — that is, if I am not asleep and dreaming. I am proud of myself also, for having such a niece — or rather — I mean — daughter."

Bertha wrote home to her father the same day, all about her princely reception at her uncle's and then all about her success in finding a situation. That letter was really a godsend to Rosco. It lifted him clear out of the Slough of Despond, and set him upon his legs. It was one of those times and seasons, with him, that Solomon the Wise writes down — namely, the time to laugh.

On the day appointed, Bertha was ready to begin her delightful task. The success she met with as a teacher, was simply surprising. In fact we are almost afraid of taxing the reader's confidence too heavily. It is with us something as the story goes about the dear little boy, that went running out to his papa in the field, to tell him that he had found "such a *bootiful* little rabbit, just as white as snow." His papa was pleased, and asked his little boy what he had done with his treasure. "O papa, I bounced it into a pail and covered it all tight." When the good man went to the house at dinner time, he looked into the pail, while his little pet was close by his side, almost ready to burst with delight. "My little boy, what does this mean?" said the father; "you told me that you had found a rabbit, but here I see *two* of them." "I know it," said the little rogue, "I knew it all the time, papa, but I said *one*, coz I was afraid you couldn't believe so many."

However, we must venture to speak the truth, whatever comes of it — namely, that Bertha, young as

she was, soon became well established and attained great popularity. For a long time she not only maintained her standing as a model teacher, but also became eminent as an educational manager. Acting in the capacity of Principal as well as preceptress, she raised the standard of that excellent and venerable institution, from step to step, until it became "*the* Female Institution of Philadelphia," *par excellence*.

Not only was she very highly esteemed and honored, for her valuable services, she was also very generously remunerated.

An old lady and gentleman at Charming Valley — yet not by any means to be called old, except by comparison — were well posted as to Bertha's success. For every month, at least, they had substantial proof of it.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RETURN.

A SUNNY and cosy little cottage with a side veranda, located on one of the most delectable of the Cincinnati heights, shaded by an old, spreading elm tree, was for several years, the home of Mrs. Gaylord, with her precious little grandson, Wilfred, the son of Leon.

From the veranda of this cottage, underneath the towering elm, everlooking the great western emporium, they could see the glorious sunset and the distant prairie farms; could see the broadening river, as it came rolling down majestically from the far distance, turning aside in its course with a grand sweep, as if to leave the city undisturbed; see the little busy steam-tugs darting and flashing, plunging and puffing with great noise and bustle, like some little men who seem to think the world would fall to pieces without them; could see the great stately steamboats steadily and solemnly plowing along, with little noise or commotion, achieving great and beneficent deeds, affecting the commerce of nations, in the quietest possible manner.

All the sounds of the great city—ringing and pealing church-bells, rattling and clanging car-wheels, the

swelling roar of approaching trains, the dying thunder of trains departing, the booming of cannon and all unnamable explosions — they could hear, grandly rolling and looming through the welkin, rising and swelling or sinking, melting away and dying.

A splendid boy was this little Wilfred Gaylord; healthful and sprightly, with a sweet and gentle disposition, speaking blue eyes and brown silken hair. Comely and fair were his features; broad and shapely his forehead; with the organs of perception palpably well developed.

When at the age of six, his grandma told him of his lovely mother, whom he never saw—his dear mother, now in heaven with the angels; told him of his father, whom also he had never seen — his dear father, so many hundred miles away, in the lonely wilderness, often writing to her, inquiring all about his little Wilfred — oft would the great welling tears break over, and the strange questions the baby boy would ask about them in quick succession, so strange, so earnest and touching, quite puzzled her — greatly puzzled and embarrassed his grandma — and her eye would sometimes fill with tears, in spite of herself.

One evening, early in the summer, while the gorgeous hues of sunset were slowly fading into the gray dusk, sitting alone by the parlor window, partly open, she overheard the little Wilfred on the veranda, with his face upturned towards the elm-tree,

thus discoursing to a robin-redbreast, which almost seemed to be listening, at intervals, and then replying; now softly warbling in the throat, as if half asleep and dreamy; then listening again as if to little Wilfred — to this pretty little warbler thus she heard the little cherub discoursing, while now and then scattering crumbs of cake in the grass, in a voice which seemed to her like the strains of an Eolian harp for sweetness:

"Now hark, my little redbreast robin; tell me, my dear little birdie, something nice about my papa. Tell me, does he love his little boy? Would he stay so long and so far away, if he does love us much — love little Willie and little Willie's grandma? Can you tell what my dear papa is doing? Do you know where papa *is*, my pretty robin? Do you know my darling papa? Is he coming — is papa coming home on the smoky railroad? Or is he coming on the great walking steamboat? Has he gone way up to heaven, where my mamma is? Has he gone to heaven, to find my dearest mamma? Now, good little robin, fly to-morrow — make haste, please do, birdie, and find my own papa. Tell him, O, sweet birdie, how much I love him, and tell him how much his little boy is growing. Tell him that Willie reads in the Fourth Reader. Tell him how much little Willie loves his dear grandma. Tell him how he prays for his dear papa every night — he never once forgets — and every morning too. Tell him about our cottage. Ask him, can he ever see the bright rainbow? Can he see the great rolling river?

Can he see the crooked new moon and the sunsets? Now my nice little birdie, come now, pick the crumbs; then fly to-morrow, straight to my own dear, naughty papa; don't forget a word, not a single word I tell you. Then I am sure, for I almost know, that my papa will come straight home to his little Willie. But you can never — no, never — see my mamma, dear birdie, for my mamma she is an angel. She can see her little Willie every day and every night. She whispers to him so sweetly — she whispers and tells him how he must love his papa, and says he must be good and mind his grandma, and tells him he must study and go to school, and be kind to the good teacher. Sometime I shall certainly see my dear mamma. Now don't forget, little birdie. Tell my papa every word, when you see him to-morrow. Now good-by. Grandma wants her Willie. Good-by, little redbreast robin. Now come again to Willie, and be sure."

Grandma was very attentively listening and very closely watching little Wilfred, and as he turned and faced the window, she saw plainly that his little heart was overcharged with emotion; saw the tear-drops standing upon his cheeks and that his eyes were swollen and red with weeping.

On the morrow, Willie went to school, according to his custom. Always prompt and ready, never was he absent from school, after the first day he entered. Always faultless in school and very studious, the teacher loved him very tenderly. This once he hesi-

tated, as if deeply thinking — as if debating in his mind some new thought. With a tardy and measured step he turned back and approached his grandma, as if in great doubt about something. In tones trembling and suppressed, almost in a whisper, as if he were afraid to express the thought that was in his mind — thus, with hesitation he spake, almost in a whisper, to his gentle grandma:

"If my dear papa comes to see us to-day, tell him he must surely wait for his little Willie to come home, and not go away. For Willie wants to see his papa so *very* much — a great many times more than he has words to tell of."

Then, with double quick step, he flew off to school, without waiting for an answer, and was off.

The same day, sitting on the broad cottage veranda, Mrs. Gaylord, as usual was engaged with her needle, but could not possibly keep her mind upon her work — could not keep it from running off and thinking — thinking upon her strange experience; musing always of Leon and also of his strange experience, and then thinking of dear little Wilfred; musing of the past and all its heavy burdens, all its great griefs and shocking disappointments; of all its dark and confounding mysteries. Neither could she keep from thinking, now and then, of the recent strange behavior of little Wilfred — of his singular words and conduct on the previous evening, talking with the robin-redbreast — of his unusual language and deportment in the morning;

hesitating, studying and doubting, with the evident impression in his mind that his papa would soon be coming home. Was his little spirit holding converse with the angel spirit of his mother?

Suddenly coming to herself, she upraised her eye. What did she see? Standing in the passage leading in from the wicket gate — standing still as any statue — upright and tall, with his eyes fastened upon her, was the apparition of Leon. Yea, in truth it *was* her son. Greatly changed, of course, but still the mother knew him.

Great was her surprise and great was her joy — she screamed aloud with transporting wonder and delight — with the ecstasy of joy and gladness. Passionately did they embrace each other and give every possible expression to their overflowing happiness and enravishment of soul — first laughing and then weeping — weeping with convulsive sobs, like little children. After the tempest of surprise and joy was over, with pious and thankful hearts — thankful to their Almighty Preserver — with silent and earnest devotion, reverentially and tearfully, they confessed His great goodness.

Not long was it before little Wilfred was thought of; and right quickly was he sent for, and brought to his father. Then there was a love feast indeed — a love feast for three — such as seldom happens in a lifetime. Wilfred and his father loved each other at first sight — intuitively. For a long time they did nothing else but kiss and embrace each other and get acquainted. Wil-

fred, of course, was obliged, temporarily, though with obvious misgivings of mind, to give up his school, in order that Leon might have him constantly in his eyes and in his arms.

"I knew you was coming, papa," said Willie, "I knew you was coming home to-day."

Leon. How did you know it, my boy?

Willie. I guess you know all about it, papa, without asking me.

Leon. Did the little robin sing to you about it, last night?

Willie. Yes, dear papa, and I knew he was going to see you to-day.

Leon. How did you know, Willie? did you understand the little bird's talk?

Willie. Yes, I did. He kept singing — *He is coming — you will see him — he is coming to-morrow.* That was all I could make him sing. But he sang it a great many times over.

Leon. Suppose I hadn't come, after all. What then, my boy, would you have thought?

Willie. I didn't think of that at all, dear papa, for I only thought that you was surely coming. Now papa, please tell me, what did the little robin say to you?

CHAPTER XXII.

STRANGE USE OF MONEY.

SEVEN years had Leon Gaylord been absent from his mother. Though full of trials and hardships, they also had been full of proud and glorious triumphs. In this seven years' expedition of his, there were triumphs as great as those of Napoleon — triumphs over enemies of all kinds, and opposition on all sides — opposition before and behind him — enemies without and within him.

His grand and culminating triumph — the sublime, beautiful and crowning triumph of his life and labors — was still unachieved. However, he was still young and full of vigor and hope. At his age, most men are but just beginning their active, earnest lives. Though he had accomplished more than is often done in a lifetime, the world was still before him.

Leon brought with him from California, a very large fortune. He brought many hundred thousand dollars. This vast amount he had acquired by vigilance and hard mental labor; by great executive wisdom, as a business manager; by practical genius in overcoming difficulties both physical and moral; by honest, square dealing with men, and by the blessing of Providence.

He brought home something still better than all his

golden treasures. He brought home a clean and approving conscience, a bright record — a record of large contributions to human progress — of measures and deeds of great public utility — the offspring of his own brain, of his own heart, or of his own hand — a record of moral triumphs over himself, far better than the taking of a city by military prowess — a record of self-discipline and training, and of sublime, unselfish triumphs. He brought home an untarnished reputation — a name covered with the lustre of good and noble deeds.

On the day following that of his arrival, Leon stood beside his wife's grave. There for several sacred hours, he remained alone. Before him moved in solemn procession, all the past of his life, unrolling before him like a grand panorama — like a vast, moving and diverse picture, in all its vivid colors and shades; traveling through the vista of his mind, upon the unrolling canvas of his memory; thrilling with intense emotions all his powerful nature, and for the hour, all his youthful ardor chilling. There were landscapes all beautiful and radiant; gardens, verdant, fragrant and flowery; waterfalls and fountains flashing in the sunlight; towering forests and fields of verdure; hills, plains and valleys, rocks and glaciers; horrid gulfs and frightful precipices; mountains bright with the pure light of heaven, and mountains black as pandemonium; angels flying and fairies dancing; murderers skulking and demons glaring; light and shade and

color in all their most bewitching and all their most startling contrasts; human happiness and human misery; consuming want and resplendent wealth, with a veil between them of the thinnest texture. Such was the panorama that unrolled before him — such the picture of his own experience — his strange, varied, heartfelt experience — all brought before his mind in full review. Such had been the life of Leon Gaylord, ere he had touched the age of thirty years. Upon Mary's grave he shed many tears of sincere grief and of genuine love.

* * * * * *

Now again was Leon joyfully living at the home of his mother — his genial, loving and now happy mother. Little Wilfred was idolized by both — by which the most, it would be hard to say.

Leon proceeded without delay to select a commanding and beautiful site, upon one of the heights of Cincinnati, and there erected a splendid and elegant mansion; where he established his homestead, with his mother at the head; and with little Wilfred, for his companion and playmate.

Next, with a ready, earnest and prolific hand, he sought in various ways to improve the city; both by his genius, and with his money. He established, at his own expense, an institution for the relief of human suffering and degradation, and in behalf of virtue and temperance — an institution for corrective and reformative purposes; especially for degraded and youthful

convicts and criminals; where, with kind and faithful teachers, who were patient, well-skilled and hopeful — moral physicians and surgeons — the restoration or relief of the unfortunate, the vicious and ignorant inmates — might happily be effected.

Many other noble spirits he also enlisted in this holy undertaking — generous, sympathetic spirits, who only needed the stimulus and guidance of Leon's philanthropic and far-seeing genius, to secure their substantial co-operation. And so the good work went bravely forward.

Nor was it long before the poorer classes of Cincinnati, generally — and with them the degraded and ignorant are necessarily included — before they felt a new and benign influence, like a living and heavenly spirit — a spirit friendly and invisible — every where present, pervading every purlieu, every lane and every tenement — a spirit watchful, kind and most propitious; whispering to the victims of poverty, suffering and sin; whispering to the low and vicious, the debased and the criminal, words of kindness, of hope and of promise — words inspiring, encouraging and uplifting.

Next, this heavenly spirit was also heard, whispering to the cold-hearted and selfish; whispering to the avaricious and grasping; words of cutting, poignant admonition; words of persuasion and words of warning; for the relief of suffering, and for the moral elevation of all classes.

Then again was it heard in the high places. This spirit was heard whispering in the ear of Power; words of counsel, of wisdom and of kindness; words of justice, of mercy and of reason; for the improvement of society; for the breaking down of barriers; for the bridging of gulfs and deep abysms. In gentle whispers spake this heavenly voice to the mighty and powerful. Thus it spake, with authority: thus in words prophetic and mandatory:

"Pave the ways to higher life and manhood. Tunnel through the mountains and the rocks — through the rocks of Avarice and the mountains of Selfishness. Dredge the streams of Friendship and Love. Build your railroads — your moral railroads — everywhere and in all directions. Level down your temples of Mammon. Level up your Christian altars. Grade and smooth the highways to Knowledge and Science. Ornament and improve the parks of Virtue. Strengthen and increase your army — your forces armed and equipped with moral weapons — weapons to conquer and to destroy — to destroy and overthrow the powers of Evil; to protect all just and righteous interests — just and righteous in the Eye Omniscient — interests of the broadest and highest justice — weapons to destroy the inebriate, root and branch — to destroy and annihilate the ignorant, and to eradicate the vicious and the criminal."

Thus did the influence of Leon Gaylord penetrate everywhere, and permeate every soul in the city. Like

a ripple upon the smooth water, thus it went traveling on by reproduction.

Leon was remarkable, in never seeming to think of his immense wealth with any degree of self-complacency or exultant pride. He never seemed to measure or weigh himself by the standard of his money. For many years he had made his old friend, General Proctor, his chief model. In fact, it might as well be mentioned here, that all through his great and beneficent operations in Cincinnati, that gentleman had been his principal adviser. Whether Leon Gaylord would ever have proved the splendid character he did, had it not been for the General's influence upon him, while they were together in the bank, we cannot tell. But this is certain — Leon came but little short of worshipping the General. They were near enough alike in character and mental structure, to be father and son. Leon was the more practical and energetic. Whatever he decided to do, was done or attempted, at precisely the right time, without delay. His methods were always the very best. Often they were invented impromptu, and were strikingly brilliant and original. The General was full of grand and philanthropic ideas, and his head was clear and his judgment remarkably sound. But without anywhere falling below the General's plane, in the broadness and loftiness of his conceptions, Leon, in executive talent, and in facility of adaptation, was greatly his superior.

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Leon's extreme application to business, began at last, to tell upon his health. He stood in need of relaxation and rest. In fact he was compelled, by a conviction of duty, to take a vacation. So he proposed to suspend for awhile the various schemes and operations, which required his personal attention. Upon consultation with his mother, they decided to break away from home and seek some pleasant retreat, for rest and recreation.

Accordingly, without any long ceremony of preparation, about the middle of July, they started — Leon, Mrs. Gaylord and the child — started for Saratoga Springs, in the State of New York; for a season of relief and rest.

As the piston shot them eastward, Leon's mind was filled with the past. He was sober, grave and abstracted. His thoughts ran upon the many startling changes which he had experienced — upon the many struggles and conflicts, upon the dark stormy days, and the bright unclouded days, upon the bitter trials, as well as the proud triumphs, and upon all the varied and strange experience, making up the history of his eventful life, during the last preceding ten years — the years since they had traveled west together — he and his mother — through these same lines of longitude — just ten years that very evening in July. He thought of the earnest conversation he then had with his mother on the steamboat — of her sensible advice and her wise admonitions, as concerning the management of his

affections; as concerning his self-discipline and culture, and his faith and trust in Divine Providence; and as concerning Bertha. Then, as he looked down upon the little treasure, sleeping by his side — such a gem of sparkling and glowing beauty — he felt, after all his trials, a thrill of joy and even of exultation. He could scarcely refrain from suspecting, or even from thinking and believing, that their trip had been really providential — namely, their former trip to Cincinnati.

The truth would not all be written, if it were forgotten to state that he also thought of Bertha. For that was something which, with all his self-discipline and self-control, he could not possibly help. His nerves became unsteady and even tremulous, and his strong, manly heart was like a reed shaken in the wind, and he could not help the tears starting at the thought and prospect of approaching the sacred ground upon which she had walked — she who had caused him the most ineffable pleasure, and the most intense pain that he had ever experienced. He still wondered, for the thousandth time, at the strange and mysterious behavior of that faultless girl. He revolved in his mind how Bertha must have developed; and he felt a kind of hallowed and unselfish curiosity to learn her history, and what had been her fortune during all the years since he had seen her. He hoped in his heart that her life had been bright and happy. He prayed — almost audibly — that she might still be living, in happiness and prosperity. He determined that he

would ascertain by particular and well-directed inquiry, all possible facts with regard to her, before he ever again turned his face towards his Ohio home. Had her life been all sunshine? Did she ever bestow a moment's thought upon Leon? Had she ever shed a single tear of love or of pity for him? Was she still as pure, as lovely, as glorious — still as noble and beautiful — still as radiant — as angelic — as she seemed to him in memory? Was her husband worthy of her? Could it possibly be that she had been wedded by a procedure entirely honorable and truthful?

CHAPTER XXIII.

RATHER DREAMY.

"Strange is the power of dreams! Who has not felt,
When in the morning light such visions melt,
How the veil'd soul, though struggling to be free,
Ruled by that deep unfathomed mystery,
Wakes, haunted by the thoughts of good or ill,
Whose shading influence pursues us still?"

THE Institute over which Bertha presided was now drawing to a close, for the long summer vacation — which was to last from the middle of July to the middle of September.

Such a grand and brilliant exhibition as she gave at the Commencement — so refined, so unostentatious and yet so delightful — in fact, such as she gave at each and every Commencement, in her special departments — brought her high distinction. For a long time she had stood as the very first in the city — not only as a teacher of the arts of music, drawing and sculpture, but also stood there as the very first organizer, manager and principal of a great educational institution.

So pleased were the patrons generally — the supporters of this old institution — and not only they, but the faculty and students also — so grateful to Bertha, and so appreciative of her rare endowments and her

genuine goodness, her unsparing, unselfish faithfulness and the unrivaled triumphs of her genius and skill — that they joined together in the purchase of a generous tribute, a splendid testimonial of their esteem and admiration — a rich and elegant necklace of diamonds, pearls and gold, worth at least two thousand dollars. It was artistically chased and engraved with devices and inscriptions, setting forth her signal merits in her profession, and her pre-eminent achievements.

On the occasion of this most rare and well-deserved presentation, Bertha's modesty, dignity and queenly grandeur, her winning gracefulness of manner and her peerless beauty of person, were the most distinguished features — were the most attractive and delightful pictures in the eyes of all observers.

On the day succeeding this ovation she was greeted by a large number of the citizens, gentry and literati of Philadelphia. No peeress could be honored with more genuine respect and admiration, or respect and admiration better earned and deserved.

Then, to crown the joyous and triumphant climax, she was tendered a proposal of marriage from a gentleman known to fame and honors; wealthy, erudite and gifted; a gentleman and statesman of high standing, of pleasing manners and fine presence — neither old, ugly nor cross — fit for a countess, or even a princess. After suitable and most respectful deliberation, with sincere and heartfelt politeness, she thanked him, with tears, for his condescension; and, with appropriate

regrets and the most inimitable grace, assured him that it was out of her power to accept his distinguished proffer.

On returning to her home, with her gold and diamond necklace and all her blooming honors, her uncle was almost disabled and incapacitated for anything. So overcome was he by her stupendous triumphs, and the dazzling homage lavished upon her, that he was all but translated. He was a man of powerful sympathies, as well as the most ardent affections.

Little Nellie was the picture of her mother — her perfect picture, in miniature; not only in form and features, but in spirit and action, also. She added much, very much, to the pleasure and sweetness of the household. In all their plans, arrangements and calculations, she was a prominent factor. Raphael Morris, being childless himself, had determined to settle a considerable portion of his wealthy estate upon mother and daughter.

When the effervescence had fully subsided, and his pulse had returned to its normal standard, he said:

"We must now have a good vacation. Without delay, we must pack our trunks for a cooler and more congenial climate. I have anticipated your vacation, Bertha, and have shaped all my affairs to be in readiness, on my part, for this hour. I trust there will be no objection to my views. My preference is for Martha's Vineyard, and my proposition is this — namely, that we proceed, without delay, to make the necessary

preparations, and start on our journey next Tuesday morning."

To this proposition Mrs. Morris objected. She had some special reasons in favor of Newport. They discussed the subject and talked it over with some earnestness and spirit. After all, they arrived at no settled conclusion.

Raphael then sought reinforcement; and began at once to canvass with Bertha.

"Bertha," said he, "what is *your* preference? Will you join with your uncle, in favor of Martha's Vineyard, or with your aunt in favor of Newport? Or will you cast your independent suffrage for Long Branch, or the White Mountains?"

Bertha answered: "I shall be most delighted with either place; nor can I express any preference. Let us all dream upon it to-night, and in the morning at breakfast, let us tell our dreams and follow their direction. Peradventure we may thus arrive at some conclusion."

This singular proposition was accepted by the other parties — each one more or less cordially consenting to be governed by such omens or hints as a majority of their dreams might furnish; though aunt Morris would have preferred her own way, without dreams. Then, for the nonce, they dismissed the question, and turned their attention to other subjects.

* * * * * *

Bertha had a large room which she had used as a

studio. Here she had spent much of her leisure time, during all the years she was teaching in Philadelphia, in practising with the chisel. She had wrought several pieces in marble, which were regarded as exceedingly fine and original. Among these were busts of her uncle and aunt, which were simply perfect. But her principal works here were a statue of herself, life-size, and also one of Leon Gaylord, as she recollected him, at the age of seventeen. She had been materially aided in this last work by a daguerreotype which Leon had given her when she first went to Philadelphia to school — the last time she had ever seen him. This little picture she had preserved as the apple of her eye.

In the course of the afternoon, the question with regard to their summer's location having been disposed of till the next morning, Bertha and her uncle sat down leisurely in the studio. "I cannot deny," her uncle said, "that when I first saw you hacking away upon the obstinate marble, I felt that you were wasting your precious time. Now I apologize, feel ashamed of myself, and freely express my astonishment and delight, at the genius and perseverance which you have here exhibited. You have achieved immortality right here, as it were in your father's house." Bertha being satiated with this kind of talk, interrupted him and attempted to turn the conversation upon other topics. With this object principally in view — namely, to escape her uncle's praises — she requested him to give her an account of his own life and experience. She wanted

to know how it was that he had spent his time and made his way in the world so successfully.

Her uncle, being in good spirits, (he was seldom otherwise) responded to his niece, by giving her a history of his business life. Beginning early, when he was a poor boy — he told her how Stephen Girard, the great millionaire, had taken him up and given him, at first, a very humble situation in his bank; how that when Girard had found him faithful and devoted to his interests, he increased his wages; how he once saved Girard a large amount of money, by sleeping in the bank, and when two burglars had managed to break in and were proceeding to find their way into the vault, where they would have fallen in with nearly a million dollars of Girard's and of other people's money, how he had shot one of the burglars dead and frightened the other away much faster than he came; how Girard, appreciating this successful act and admiring his pluck, had immediately doubled his salary, besides giving him a third chance in one of his vessels at sea that had sailed to the West Indies for a cargo of sugars and was then three months over-due, and was supposed by everybody that professed any wisdom at all about such things, to be at the bottom of the sea; how that in less than a week afterwards the ship came into port with an immense cargo of sugars and other West India produce, the third of which and of the vessel had netted him, (Raphael,) something over fifty thousand dollars, and how he then proceeded to invest this amount in

real estate in the city, which had gone on appreciating in value, until at length it had placed him in very comfortable circumstances. He was now estimated to be worth half a million dollars, at least.

Upon the following morning, when all the little family were seated around the breakfast table, uncle Raphael, brought up the question again as to their summer's residence; and called out for dreams.

"Dreams," he said, "are now in order." Dreamers to the front. Let us have a free and full report. Thereby may hang a very pregnant tale. Modern civilization is frightfully hoodwinked, in regard to the future. And life is literally turned into a play of Blindman's-buff, to all the human race. To the gods it must present a most ludicrous sight. Now why is this? I answer, simply because the language of dreams is not understood. We are like birds with one wing, that cannot fly for want of the other; or like the giant with one eye, and that one behind. We often wonder at the longevity of the antediluvians. Here is the explanation. They knew how to interpret dreams. They peeped into the future, foresaw the danger and hid themselves, and lived on. Dreams are like a burglar-proof safe containing untold treasures — treasures of knowledge. To us moderns, the key with its combinations, which opens the safe, has been lost. Dreams are the spy-glass which reveals the future. We have, unfortunately, lost the focus, and have also lost the trick of finding it. A grave loss it is. The business of us

moderns is to find this focus again and bring it in accord with the visual organs. If we succeed well in this, then we can go in search of the Tree of Knowledge; and with a right fair prospect of finding it. Common sense teaches us that all dreams are not equally significant. Some, it must be admitted, have no significance whatever, with regard to the future; while with regard to past suppers, they are as chuckfull of instruction as the suppers were of mischief and nightmare. Shakspeare says that 'dreams are made of such stuff as men and women are.' Then, of course, the subject must be a hard one to master. For men and women are said to be 'riddles that cannot be expounded,'—a remark that has some poetry and some truth in it.

"To deny the authority of dreams is to reject the Bible itself. This, of course, is a dangerous business. If the sacred books prove any thing at all, they prove the immense value of dreams, and their prophetic reliability. Jacob, the elect of the Lord, was a very eminent dreamer. And he made some very good financial speculations by his art. He was certainly a very highly favored man. He was also a very shrewd man. To what extent his good fortune resulted from his shrewdness may be a matter of opinion. But this talent of dreaming seems to have been a family trait. It seemed to run in the blood; and it cropped out in his son Joseph, who proved one of the best dreamers in all history, and also one of the best interpreters;

becoming prime minister and *de facto* governor of the richest kingdom on earth. Could he ever have achieved such eminence except through dreams? I put the question to scholars — the more profound the better. I pause for a reply. Then there was Daniel the prophet. Just look at Daniel. He dreamed and interpreted dreams until he arrived at the very pinnacle of greatness. Samuel dreamed, Solomon dreamed, Ezekiel dreamed, Pharaoh dreamed, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed, Isaiah dreamed, Peter dreamed — and many others also, in those Bible times. And in every instance, a telephonic message from the other world was plainly received.

"The different practical ways of utilizing dreams, when once the great treasures of their storehouse shall be unfolded by Science, are far beyond the power of language to describe. Who can imagine the number of life saving, money-making patent medicines that will be discovered; the number of great fortunes carved out; the number of quarrels hushed up between husbands and wives; the number of valuable lives saved from the relentless duel, the gallows and the state-prison; the political advantages gained and the political enemies discomfited, and other blessings secured and other mischiefs nipt in the bud, too numerous to mention — simply through this liberty-saving, labor-saving and life-saving science. That is to say, when the lost key shall be found again for unlocking the science of Dreams! Now let us hear from the Dreamers."

The first who spoke was Mrs. Morris. She had no report to render. She had had no revelation. She evidently thought the performance altogether a little undignified. She passed the question over to Bertha.

"I had," Bertha said, "a very delightful dream, which has left a deep impression in my mind. It was rather a vision than a dream. I saw a stately palace standing on the height of a great city. Conspicuous and beautiful, it stood in the midst of trees and shrubbery and choice flowers and the most witching scenery. Standing there in all its grandeur and loveliness, it looked like the very home of the fairies. In the distance, along the base of those lofty and commanding heights, rolled a majestic river, winding through miles of the landscape, like a shining and gracefully meandering cord of silver."

While Bertha was giving a description of her dream, she was also sketching, with her pencil, by the side of her breakfast plate, upon a sheet of paper. With the most telling touches, as if by some magic skill, she turned her dream into a beautiful picture of a palatial mansion, in the midst of a magnificent landscape, full of light and music and animation.

After all, Bertha's vision seemed to afford no assistance in settling the question before the house — the main question, as to their summer's destination. As yet no progress had been made in that direction.

Finally little Nellie was called upon to tell *her* dream.

"O," she answered, "I saw something so joyful and touching, just before my dear mamma woke me up. I saw a very blessed and lovely man. He was so very tall and splendid and had such twinkling and beautiful eyes. His face was almost as handsome as my own dear mamma's. He had by his side such a dear little boy, that my eyes would keep looking at him in spite of myself. I couldn't possibly help it; for he was just like a remarkable angel. His papa's face looked very solemn. It was ever so beautiful and smiling, but his eyes would keep running over with tears. He seemed to have some sorrrow in his mind; and I could hear him talking to himself about something that he had lost. I seemed to feel so very pitiful towards him that the tears would keep trickling in my eyes, and it was all I could do to keep them dry. By his other side there was a very lovely casket, which seemed to shine like gold. It was empty though, for it was open and I could see that it was all empty. 'O,' said he, 'my gem is stolen! I have lost my priceful treasure!' He looked at me so sweetly that I almost seemed to love him. 'Here,' said he, 'is our dear little Nellie. Now she must help me find my jewel.' Then I was just going to tell him where he could find it — for I thought that I knew where it was — and I was just turning round to show him, and there I saw the funniest little building, all made of openwork, and it had collumades all round, like those that I saw round the Mint; and all the doors and windows were taken away; it seemed

all alive with men and women, going and coming, and they all seemed to be drinking. I saw these words painted on the curious building in bright yellow letters, CONGRESS SPRING. That, dear uncle, was all the dream that I had; for my mamma shook and woke me up and said I must dress for breakfast. My pretty dream was all over then, of course. And I was sorry that mamma disturbed me."

Then they all shouted out, with sudden exclamation — they all shouted in concert — "Saratoga! Saratoga!!"

So, without any discussion, the question was settled, and on the following Tuesday their trunks were all packed and ready, and they started in high glee for Saratoga Springs.

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Mrs. Morris was a Spiritualist. Uncle Raphael, with all his surface talk, was at bottom a Quaker; strictly and solidly Orthodox. When all things were in readiness for their summer hegira, Mrs. Morris, at the tea-table, suggested that little Nellie's dream, which had so clearly settled the question in favor of Saratoga, was neither more or less than the voice of spirit-friends, who had interposed their kindly influence, to bring about some important event. This, she was convinced they would all be compelled to acknowledge, in due time. Uncle Raphael, as usual, was inclined to jocularity; and in his own peculiar way, made light of all such fantastical nonsense — as he facetiously characterized it.

"Now Bertha," he said, "give us *your* views upon this new-fangled heresy; and let it, once for all, receive its quietus, from your oracular logic. Bring the argument home to the capacity of your heretical aunt, in such a way that she will not be inclined to hug such an absurd and chimerical delusion any longer."

Very modestly, but in an earnest manner, Bertha expressed her convictions upon this subject:

"I see nothing unscriptural," said she, "nothing absurd in the idea of spirit communications. In fact, the mere idea seems orthodox. But most of the communications, attributed to the spirits, on the contrary, seem to me grossly unspiritual and inconsistent. Underneath all this, however, who knows but there may be a germ of the genuine truth, which may yet expand and bless the world with its blossoms and its fruit. Who can conceive anything better adapted and more benignly appropriate to this dark and mysterious life, than intercourse with the spirit world, through some natural intermedium? Could anything seem more consistent with the character of a loving God, than the idea that such an essential link in the chain of existence should not be lacking? Look at that venerable old man! hoary with age, trouble and bereavement! All that was most dear to him in the world has been snatched from his loving embrace by the relentless hand of Death. In the midst of the multitude he is solitary and sad. In this glorious and

beautiful world there is nothing beautiful to him, because he cannot possibly help the thought that the great hereafter is dark and uncertain. His earnest mind is in a state of painful suspense, upon this all-important question, which of all conditions, is the most trying and painful. He can see much in the universe that goes to prove, to his honest and pious judgment, the dissolution of all individualities, and the continuous and eternal activity of creative power. Now, at the very climax of his mortal life, when his expansive soul should be in the very blossom of its being — the green, mottled earth and the blue spangled heavens pouring into it the delicious luxuries of God — he is weighed down with crushing doubts and fears, as to the continuity and immortality of his existence — an existence which is, otherwise, so capable of delight and happiness. We know that Mind has certain properties in common with Matter, and such relations with it, *sometimes*, as to act directly upon it, as the superior acts upon the inferior; inducing motion in infinite variety. We know that the will is constantly effecting a contraction of the muscular fibre, and thus causing, directing and controlling the movements and actions of the body. In how many other ways, and through what media the spirit may act, who shall positively affirm? Other and inanimate creatures of God manifest themselves in a variety of ways. Electricity, for instance, has its extraordinary, as well as its ordinary methods of action. It is only by its exceptional and

interrupted methods that its vast power — or even its existence — is known to man. The orthodox belief, once admitted to be true — that the human soul has a separate and independent entity — what the powers and possibilities of that soul may be, in its separate state, is a question which I dare not attempt to solve. God has the means of doing whatever is fit and proper to be done. And what, to the reason of man, can be more proper and fit than to encourage an immortal soul in its rough passage through this life, and confirm its confidence in God and immortality? It would seem that a firm belief in all the scriptural records, should strengthen rather than invalidate this doctrine. The earnest longings which are so generally felt for spiritual manifestations, in all classes of thoughtful minds, whether Christian or infidel, may also be regarded as some evidence of their reality — or at least, of their possibility."

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At the close of Bertha's argument, it was Mrs. Morris' turn to exult over Raphael. Though staid and sober in her manner, she was evidently filled with delight; and she looked over upon him with an air of triumph. Raphael never opened his lips.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SARATOGA SPRINGS.

AFTER sojourning many days in Saratoga, with the grand, fashionable, fluctuating multitude of that crowded, populous, deciduous town — that temporary, periodical, heterogeneous city — walking out, as usual, one day upon the green and velvet carpet of the close-mown Common, dotted here and there with shrubbery — with shading, ornamental trees and evergreens, and all kinds of flowering shrubbery — in order to be apart from the crowd and yet to enjoy the scenery and inhale the fragrant atmosphere of the place — Raphael, with his wife and little Nellie, (Bertha was on one of her strolls for sketching,) lo, the little fairy gave a sudden scream, as from some sudden and very pleasant discovery.

"There he is now," said she, "that lovely man I saw the other night, with the little boy. But the casket of gold seems to be gone away."

Then quickly she started in the direction of the gentleman and little boy. Trippingly, the little fairy ran towards the splendid looking gentleman, walking so thoughtfully, with really a most beautiful little boy by his side. Quick as thought started the little fairy, and quick as flash the boy beheld her. Instantly the boy

flew away from his father, and instantly the two children joined each other — as by strong mutual attraction — as by some strange, irresistible influence. In the most loving manner they proceeded to kiss each other.

They seemed as happy and delighted as if they had just then found and met each other after months and months of separation.

Uncle Raphael, controlling his excitement of feeling, walking towards the children with a lively step, very gently and mildly spake to little Nellie:

"My dear child, what in the name of Mercy, is the meaning of such strange actions as these?"

"O," said she, "I have found my brother — my little lost brother. Here he is, dear uncle, and I am so very glad!"

They were all amazed — Uncle Raphael, Mrs. Morris, and Leon Gaylord — the reader understands of course that this was Leon — all stood petrified — stood in blank, downright amazement, at this unaccountable conduct of the children. For some seconds neither one of them either spake or moved. It seemed like a striking tableau representing some strange scene in fiction.

Leon first broke the silence and spake to Raphael. At watering places it is not an unusual thing for strangers to address each other informally. Thus spake Leon:

"Friend, are you this little fairy's father? There is

something which to me seems very strange and dream-like, both in her face and actions. I have seen a face so very like hers, with such a form, and with motions of such rare grace — form so perfect and motions so fairy-like — face so sweet — nay, so heavenly — once in the early experience of my life — a being so very like this fairy — in form, feature and action — that I can scarcely approve my senses. It all seems to my mind like a dream. Surely these children must be entire strangers. Never could they have met each other before this moment. Yet do they seem as glad and happy in their meeting as any loving sister and brother, surprised to find each other after many months of separation."

Raphael, still much excited, thus answered:

"'Tis my ward — my niece, sir, whom you call the little fairy; and her name, it is Nellie Forester. We live in Philadelphia. We have adopted her."

When Leon heard the name Forester, he was still more bewildered and more deeply involved than before.

"Pray tell me, my good sir," said he, "who is her father? Who are her father and mother? Are they living — both of them?"

Very frankly Raphael replied:

"No; her father is not living, at least they have never heard from him since he left home very suddenly — left under a cloud and very strangely — just after his marriage to this little fairy's mother. He went away, in fact, before the honey-moon was fairly over.

I never saw him, but now I think his Christian name was Edward. This little Nellie's mother is my own niece."

While this conversation was going on, little Wilfred and Nellie were walking hand in hand upon the lawn. At length they had strolled quite a distance away, and were sitting together under a pleasant shade tree, closely beside each other, talking lovingly, laughing and looking in each other's faces. Raphael and Leon, meanwhile, were closely watching the children's motions.

Leon Gaylord, with trembling interest, went on questioning concerning Nellie's mother. Where was she living? Was she still a widow? Was she contented and happy? Did this little daughter resemble her?

Raphael, in the friendliest manner, continued to answer his questions frankly:

"Yes, her mother is still a widow. She lives with me, her own uncle — her mother's brother. She lives in Philadelphia with us, and is a very distinguished teacher. She presides in one of the first — I might truly say, in the very first — institution in all the city of Philadelphia. She has been very highly honored — with great receptions, and even with distinguished offers of marriage from great men, and what not."

"Probably she is under some matrimonial engagement at the present time," said Leon, his voice trembling with emotion.

"I think not," said Raphael; "or rather, I might say

positively, she is not. For I happen to know that within the past month she has declined a magnificent proffer, which would have been very advantageous for any single lady to accept."

"Is she here? Is she now in Saratoga?"

"Yes," said Raphael, "she is here; always strolling about in bye-places, and always sketching; strolling and sketching. In conversation with us, she will often speak of her old troubles — of her former bereavements and great sufferings. Her mind seems then to be struggling under very painful emotions. With this exception, she seems to be very contented — always very contented and happy. Her first lover, of whom she often speaks, was snatched away from her by death, very shortly before the day of their expected wedding. Then she sank down in deep dejection of mind. For months and months she was in deep despair, but finally recovered; and then her life took a new turn, and was newly modeled. Ever since, she has given her attention to learning and teaching."

"It seems that she wedded, notwithstanding her great bereavement." Thus, under much excitement, ejaculated Leon.

"Yes, she married; but in great sorrow, almost frantic. She married for the sake of others, and not to please herself. She married to please her father."

Here, in turning their eyes towards the children, in the distance, they saw Bertha, standing by them, looking down upon them and talking with them, as if deeply interested.

All at once, as by a single impulse, the three started forward — Leon, Raphael and Mrs. Morris — towards the other three. Presently all were together, and there was another striking tableau. Leon was standing squarely in front of Bertha. Standing together, face to face, were they; and, sitting between them, upon the rest, were little Wilfred and little Nellie, contentedly sitting side by side upon the rest. Mrs. Morris and her husband had halted a few steps behind Leon, with a most astonished expression of countenance. For one pregnant moment all were motionless and speechless.

With the most perfect recognition of each other, in a voice which sounded in Bertha's ear like the voice of the archangel, Leon broke the silence: —

"I am Leon Gaylord! Was your name once Bertha Bower?"

Bertha turned deathly pale, and fainted — and would have fallen, but Leon sprang, stood beside her, and caught her in his strong arms.

Raphael fluttered and flew about, and knew not what to do — ran first one way and then the other, fanned Bertha, and called for water. Mrs. Morris held the camphor, and bathed Bertha's temples with it. So, with this and with that, and all together, the color at length returning to Bertha's lips, she soon became conscious again, and opened her eyes and spake.

Looking up to Leon, with a smile of infinite expression, "Yes," said she, "my name is Bertha. I thought

Leon Gaylord was in heaven. Many long years have I thought my dear Leon was in heaven."

"Never before — never till this hour," said Leon; "never till this very moment! This is heaven, my dearest, my own Bertha; yea, this is heaven!"

* * * * * *

Leon, it may be supposed, had some preparation of mind for this overwhelming event, in his conversation with Uncle Raphael, in the striking resemblance of little Nellie to her mother — the image of whose childhood was so deeply engraved in his heart — and in his vivid recollections of the story of Edward Forester. The impressions, which for the previous fifteen minutes had been rushing upon him, from these sources, and which had had no shadow of an existence in his mind before — amounting almost to a positive conviction of Bertha's actual proximity, and of her unshaken truth and fidelity towards him — must have tested the fortifications of his soul beyond any thing that had happened to him even in California.

There was no time in his after life when he would not sooner have lost every dollar of his vast estate than the experience of those fifteen minutes.

Bertha could not possibly have had any — even the remotest — thought of meeting Leon. She had never expressed any doubt, and probably had never entertained any, with regard to his death, up to the instant when she first laid her eyes upon him in the Common at Saratoga. She afterwards said, in reference to this,

that for a moment she could not believe her senses — that she thought herself in a dream; and then, that the truth, which had never before been suggested to her, flashed upon her like lightning — namely, the fact that she had been deceived and sacrificed by Forester. She said that in this one moment of silence, while the two were gazing, speechless, into each other's eyes, the rushing, sweeping panorama of views and train of thoughts that passed through her mind seemed as if whirled along by electric machinery or a frightened locomotive.

CHAPTER XXV.

FRUITION.

BEHIND a couple of little evergreen balsams — peering between them — within earshot of this scene — this tableau and scene, enacted by these six — stood, with the most intense interest — listening and watching — watching closely and keenly listening — *the seventh.* There, almost ready to fly into a thousand pieces, from the centrifugal whirl of her emotions, watching and waiting, stood Mrs. Gaylord.

When the scene was now at its climax — when that lady's heart was swelling with unbounded joy — when her soul was overflowing with delirious emotions, from behind the spreading balsams, Mrs. Gaylord sprang out, with a cry of ecstasy, and joined the party.

Now, indeed was the scene most affecting. There was Leon overwhelmed and deluged with a wave of paradisian bliss — with a tidal wave of concentrated heavenly rapture — weeping convulsively, as if in a paroxysm of anguish. Bertha was in a perfect blaze of joy. She seemed like a lovely angel of light. Her voice, to Leon's hearing, seemed the very symphony of heaven. Mrs. Gaylord, in a spasm of rapture, nearly lost her self-possession. Weeping first and then laugh-

ing, and then weeping and laughing all together, now she embraced one and now the other. She seemed more like a child than a sterling woman, as she was.

Mrs. Morris and her kind-hearted husband saw the astounding situation, in its true light. Though happy in a certain measure — happy merely by reflection and sympathy — happy by reflected rays from Bertha — their happiness, in spite of themselves, was undoubtedly mixed with many misgivings; while most unmeasured was their wonder and surprise at the dream of the little girl and its passing strange — almost literal fulfilment.

When at length the intoxication of the hour had fairly subsided — when at length through such a tempest of surprise and transport, Bertha, Leon and Mrs. Gaylord found themselves in a new world and all restored to reason, the party, all together, went with Leon to his parlors, at the Grand Union Hotel.

Then the grand recital commenced — the circumstantial rehearsal of the grand drama — of the long, varied and most thrilling drama — thrilling, eventful and romantic — of their several lives and fortunes, for the last preceding ten years.

The two children never for a single moment wearying of each other, found entertainment in great abundance, by themselves and without any assistance.

Mrs. Morris and her husband were listeners,— silent and deeply interested listeners. In every new disclo-

sure — in every succeeding sentence of the different speakers, they saw some new indication — some new and portentous symptom — of their own certain and imminent bereavement. Thus their cloud of sadness thickened more and more, as the complex scene went on unfolding.

Thus it is that the anxious kinsman and friend, standing watchfully by the sick-bed, as the signs of approaching dissolution follow closely, one after another, in terrible succession, feels a new and sharper pang at the exhibition of every new and fatal symptom — each and every new indication of the imminent death-scene.

Nothwithstanding their coming bereavement — now so assured and so threatening, Raphael and his wife were happy — sincerely and unselfishly happy; and that, purely and entirely, for Bertha's sake.

It is safe to affirm, that not with all the thousands upon thousands thronging the hotels and boarding houses of Saratoga, was there such another glorious vacation — so delightful and so unclouded in every particular — so exuberantly blissful in every feature — as was this of Bertha, Leon and Mrs. Gaylord.

Now were the noxious vapors all lifted. Now did the sombre darkness all recede. Scattered now was the lurid twilight. The dewy, cloudless morn was dāwning. The bright sun-rays were now shooting athwart the heavens, presaging the full-orbed sun in

all its glory. New plans and new enterprises were to be entertained. New life-schemes were in order.

* * * * * *

When at length the watering season was advancing to its close, in mid September, there arose to the surface a knotty question. The good-hearted Raphael and his wife strenuously insisted — even insisted with tears — that the nuptials now approaching ought by right to be celebrated, in their own dwelling, Bertha's adopted home, in Philadelphia.

Bertha, on the other hand, quite as zealously and ably, represented Charming Valley. Both had claims that seemed insuperable. For several days the question was in suspense, and seemed a very knot of Gordius.

At length Leon Gaylord interposed with his suggestions and advice.

"Bertha, my love," he said, "start to-morrow morning for Charming Valley. Take with you your uncle and aunt; also little Nellie. Consult the wishes of your father and mother. Doubtless new thoughts will there be suggested. Talk the matter over freely and calmly. If there is still no solution of the enigma, set the little fairy to dreaming. In some such way, no doubt, the question will settle itself. Then, advise me of the conclusion; when, with my mother and little Wilfred, I will fly to the embrace of my beloved — either to her old home in Charming Valley or her later home in Philadelphia."

This proposal was finally acceded to by both parties. Next morning the four were all ready to start. But a new difficulty arose. They could not part the children. Wilfred, who was generally so sweetly mild and governable, preferred rather to leave his grandma and father than his new playmate, Nellie. What could they do, but allow both children to go on with them to Charming Valley?

When they arrived at Mr. Bower's cottage in Charming Valley, and when the great surprise was over, and Rosco had heard the story of Leon, graphically related by Bertha, when he heard her full description of him, setting forth his talents and splendid presence, his stately manners and genial spirit — his eloquence in conversation and his rare judgment and intelligence — setting forth that the veritable Leon Gaylord was, after all, still living and breathing — setting forth all his California life, with all its hardships, perils, and successes; and when he saw the little cherub, self-evidently Leon's boy — such a substantial proof, and withal, such a delightful treasure — many old memories rushed back upon him — rushed with great force upon his spirit, and broke open the flood-gates of his heart. He seemed to take new courage again; and new hopes and aspirations seemed to rise up in his soul. He wept such tears as he had never wept before — tears of a broken heart and of genuine repentance.

As the Phœnix is said to rise out of its own ashes —

to a better and more joyous life — so the hopes of Rosco Bower, from the ashes of his former hopes and fortunes — ashes caused by the fires of his own folly and pride — rose again to new and nobler life.

When the shock was at length all over, and the most cordial feelings were interchanged between all, then was the wedding question brought forward for discussion.

Cheerfully did Rosco and Mrs. Bower consent that their daughter's nuptials should be solemnized in Philadelphia, as it were upon the battle-field of her great victories; where she had been treated with such favor and kindness; and where the great body of her recent acquaintances, friends and patrons resided.

* * * * * *

A glorious day was the fifteenth of October, the wedding day — but, more properly, the coronation day — of Bertha and Leon.

The occasion, worthy of a prince and princess, was brilliant in all its appointments. Beside the few near relatives, there were present many dear friends of Bertha, of high standing; many wealthy, prominent and cultured citizens.

Not the most striking and notable features of the scene were its magnificence and grandeur, but rather the heartfelt interest and affectionate sympathy manifested by all the guests. Often is it lightly asserted that *truth is stranger than fiction.* But seldom is this

saying capable of exemplification in the actual experiences of life. Those who had heard the very extraordinary antecedents of the bride and bridegroom called it the most unreasonable and unlikely of stories — almost too full of romantic absurdity for a respectable fiction. When, at length, they were compelled to yield their credence — when the truth was at last forced upon them — then there were tears to be seen; plenty of great, glistening tears, standing upon many faces — tears of deep and pungent emotion — tears of sincere, overflowing congratulation.

The tears shed by Raphael Morris had a variety of meanings. First he wept tears of joy and true affection for his favorite and beloved niece; joy for such resplendent fortune as had now overtaken her — fortune so long in coming, but so well deserved. Then did he weep for his own misfortune, for his great bereavement — his great unlooked-for double loss and bereavement — loss of Bertha and Nellie.

Rosco wept also, for several distinct reasons. One, at least, was unlooked-for joy and exultant gladness; and one, we may be permitted to hope, was true and sincere repentance.

Mrs. Gaylord wept for excessive, redundant and extravagant joy — unalloyed pleasure and delight — delight and pleasure almost fit for heaven.

The scene was full of gladness, heartfelt and exuberant gladness; full of overflowing tears, tears of gush-

ing joy and unmixed delight; full of ringing laughter, from rare, overflowing joy of heart; full of mirth and merriment, resounding on every hand.

Intoxication, undisguised and unchecked — not at all from indulgence in stimulating beverage, but in genuine spiritual nectar — ruled both the hour and the occasion.

* * * * * *

Time went tripping along as usual, every step swinging his great sickle; stepping and stepping, swinging and swinging, cutting and cutting; sickle so sharp, motion so steady; hurling everything in all directions; turning everything topsy-turvy; ever still making new combinations, ever still trying new experiments; fond of changes, both great and small; never ceasing changes; fond of varying, kaleidescopic exhibitions. Stepping, still stepping, and never, never wearying; oft explaining the darkest of mysteries, oft revealing the profoundest of secrets; breaking through dungeon walls; letting in the cheering sunlight into the darkest places; letting in the warming sun-rays into the chilliest of regions; ever bringing forth to the surface sights the most stunning and objects the most surprising. Steadily thus was he marching on, as through all the years of the Everlasting.

Time, the servant of servants, with the forelock, Time, the tyrant, with the sickle — brought again to the heights of Cincinnati, under a change of auspices,

Leon Gaylord and his mother — brought the radiant column of celestial beauty, looming so gloriously in the orient heavens — brought the casket of burnished gold, containing its priceless gem, which Leon saw in his vision — brought the little fairy and cherub, little Wilfred and Nellie — brought the happiest little party that was ever seen upon this planet since the meeting of Joseph with his father and brethren in Egypt — brought them all together in Cincinnati — to Gaylord's beautiful homestead — the palace sketched by Bertha at the breakfast table, from her dream — sketched as truly and artistically as though it had been done by the most renowned master, standing before it, inspired by the matchless beauty of the real scene — brought substantial prosperity to Rosco, through the agency of his noble son-in-law, whom he had formerly treated with such heartless cruelty and such criminal selfishness, under the severe but merciful permission of Heaven — Rosco now thoroughly chastened and converted, disciplined and graciously rescued from the power of his worst enemies — namely, his own avarice and foolish pride — brought to Leon Gaylord high distinction both in political and social life — brought him to the very summit of popularity in the city, and to great honor both in the State and Nation — brought many solid improvements to the people — educational, moral and material — through Leon's stupendous generosity, his practical wisdom and his unbounded influ-

ence — his influence, joined with that of Bertha, which in her sphere, was equal to his own — brought to those peerless children, Wilfred and Nellie, who were the perfect counterparts of each other, the most splendid gifts and the most liberal culture, useful and efficient lives, and the most beautiful characters — brought them life-long happiness, in realization and in prospect, in the thought and presence of each other — in each other's love and approval — brought to Bertha full compensation for the cruel suffering of her former life — so cruel, so appalling and so protracted — brought to Leon and Bertha two sweet, model children, son and daughter — brings now, at last, the closing passage of my story.

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